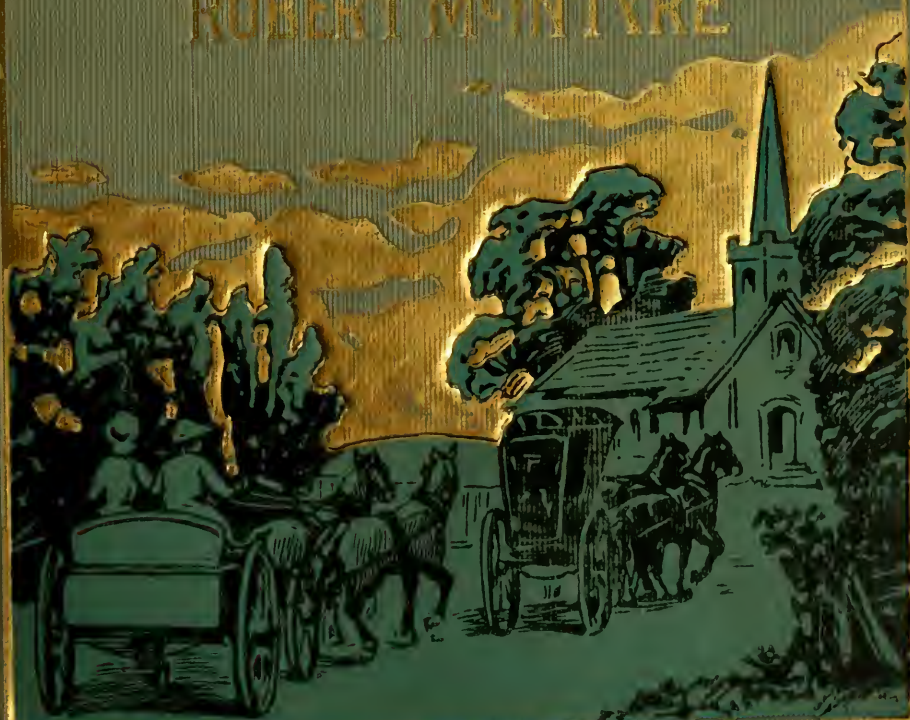




AT
EARLY
CANDLE
LIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

ROBERT MCINTYRE



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THE LILACS

At Early Candle Light
And Other Poems



Robert McIntyre

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THE WESTERN METHODIST BOOK CONCERN.

TO MY WIFE





*THIS fell to me, to strike the strings
Of mine own harp with strenuous hand,
Refreshed to tell the joy that rings
Through all the course of common things,
Believing some would understand.*

*No tale is here of those old days
When warriors went in armor drest;
Melodious words and honeyed lays
Seem all too smooth to fitly phrase
The making of the mighty West.*

*No eagle's sweep, as, round and round,
He climbs the amplitude of air
On fearless wing, will here be found;
The warbling white-throat's low, clear sound
And wavering flight is all I dare.*

*Here winds the woodbine, wet with dew,
And here the canes of cat-tails grow;
Here lift the bells of larkspurs blue,
And morning-glories such as grew
From out the loam of long ago.*

*Here doth the swallow write her runes
On the palimpsest of the pool;
The chevroned blackbird fifes his tunes;
The crocks of cream, like golden moons,
Make twilight in the dairy cool.*

*Here blows the scent by sweetbrier made;
Here cameo acorns strike the sod;
The glow-worm's lantern lights the glade,
The smile of stars on snow-fields laid,
Where earth, asleep, doth dream of God.*

*One heaped-up harvest now is mine;
Faring so far with nature hath
Healed mine own heart; and if one line
Shall win me fellowship with thine,
Then cometh in my aftermath.*

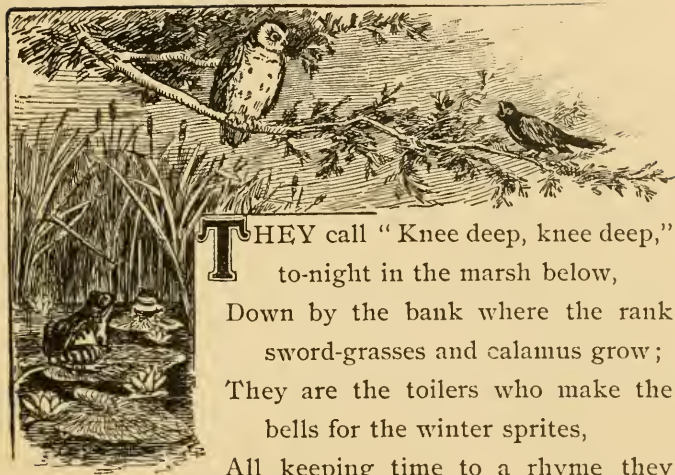


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"KNEE DEEP"



THEY call "Knee deep, knee deep,"
to-night in the marsh below,
Down by the bank where the rank
sword-grasses and calamus grow;
They are the toilers who make the
bells for the winter sprites,
All keeping time to a rhyme they
work thro' the summer nights,

While up from the swampy forge the sparks of the fire-
flies rise

O'er the pool where wading lilies make love, thro' half-
shut eyes,

To the whippoorwill, who scolds like a shrew at the
fluffy owl,

While the night-hawk shuffles by, like a monk in a
velvet cowl,

And the bat weaves inky web thro' the white star-beams
that peep
Down thro' the cypress boughs, where the frogs all sing
"Knee deep."

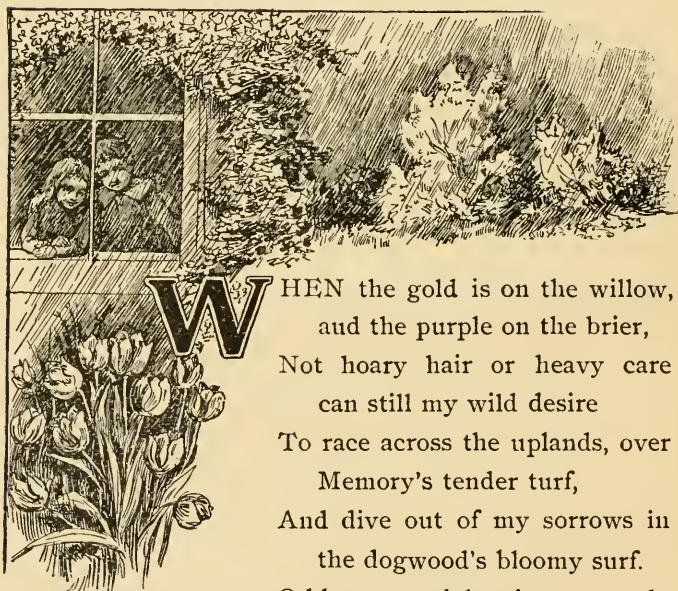
Strange that the spell of a song should summon a man
like me
Back thro' the bygone years to the scenes that used to be,
When earth was hid from heaven by one rose-hedge, and
through
This bourn the blessed angels looked, and asphodel
odors blew;
Strange the invisible choir, deep hid in the swaying
sedge,
Should woo my mind to wander again down to the
water's edge;
But whenever I hear that carol clear, across the wide
morass,
All the evening calm and the twilight balm into my
being pass;
From off my soul the sorrows roll, and I feel my spirit leap
With exultant joy as when, a boy, I shouted back,
"Knee deep!"

Knee deep I wade in the winding brook with buttercups
o'erblown—
The gold upon its rippled breast half hidden and half
shown;

Knee deep in the billows of marigolds, across the meadows fair,
 That dance upon the wanton winds and toss their yellow hair;
 Knee deep where the bubbles of clover break upon the summer sea,
 As thick as the stars that shine upon the breast of eternity;
 Knee deep in litter of autumn leaves I rustle toward the place
 Where the rabbit unaffrighted sits, and washes her innocent face;
 Song of the quivering culms and osiers, I am wading again, in truth,
 Knee deep in the stream of Memory, that flows from the land of Youth.



WHEN THE GOLD IS ON THE WILLOW



WHEN the gold is on the willow,
and the purple on the brier,
Not hoary hair or heavy care
can still my wild desire
To race across the uplands, over
Memory's tender turf,
And dive out of my sorrows in
the dogwood's bloomy surf.
O blue were violets in our youth,
and blue were April skies,
And blue the early song-bird's wings, but bluer were
the eyes
That, in that land of long ago, looked thro' the window
pane,
And saw the tulips nod to us amid the slanting rain,

Where all the dusk was glowing with our ruddy cottage
fire,
When the gold was on the willow, and the purple on the
brier.

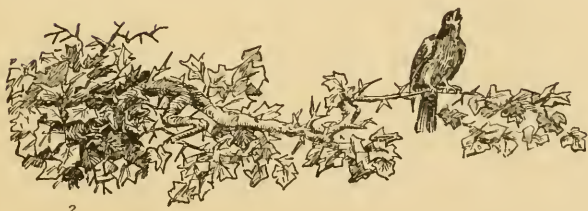
When the gold is on the willow, and the purple on the
brier,
The ducats of the dandelions have paid old Winter's
hire,
And sent him shuffling northward in garb of tattered
snow;
White-tasseled birches after him their balmy odors
throw.
Carousing in the bramble brake the brown bees, booz-
ing, sip,
And up the river's cataracts the shining salmon slip.
The schoolboy's spirit leaveth him upon the weary
seat,
And over loamy furrows leaps, with lightsome heart, to
greet
The chipmunk on the mossy wall, the bullfrog in the
mire,
When the gold is on the willow, and the purple on the
brier.

When the gold is on the willow, and the purple on the
brier,
He whistles the cantata of the blackbird's noisy choir,

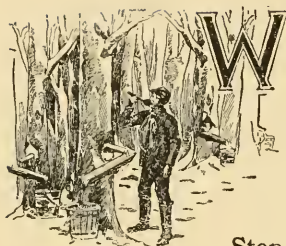
And all the murmurous music of a manumitted stream
Sings soft around his naked feet, where shallow ripples
gleam,
As if the loops of crystal wherein the lad doth wade
Had threaded through the lilies of some Paradise
arcade,
And little laughing angels had tucked their tunics
high,
To splash across its limpid shoals before it left the sky;
And still it lilts the melody of lute, and harp, and lyre,
When the gold is on the willow, and the purple on the
brier.

When the gold is on the willow, and the purple on the
brier,
It may be sin to say it, but I fear that I shall tire
Of heaven's eternal summer, and sometimes I will
yearn
To see, across the greening swale, a budding maple
burn.
My soul can ne'er be satisfied where sweet Spring never
hath
Her way along the mountain side or by the meadow
path,
Where kingcups never catch the sun, or bluebells mock
the sky,
Or trout beneath the foam-wreaths hide, or bass jump at
the fly,

And, in some homesick moment, for a furlough I'll
inquire,
When the gold is on the willow, and the purple on the
brier.



THE SUGAR CAMP



WHEN you want a treat, delicious
to eat, pass by the poor old
bees;

Slip out and go, thro' a late
March snow, to a bush of
sugar-trees;

Step down the hill, when all is still,
and soft blue smoke is curled

In the frosty haze, where ice-gems blaze, when sundown
takes the world.

No honey of flowers in this world of ours, no sap of the
Southern cane,

Melts on the lip like the sweets that drip from a wounded
maple's grain;

And if you take up a gourd or a cup of the plain old-
fashioned stamp,

And sip some juice, you will then turn loose and shout
in the sugar camp.

The giants there have strength to spare; their seed no
man has sown;

But the Lord, who willed our good, has tilled and tended
them alone.

One hundred years of smiles and tears—of the sunshine
and the dew—

Have gone to build the tree that spilled its blood to-
day for you.

O to wander free, as I used to be, through that grand
primeval grove,

Meandering slow, as I used to go, with the sled and the
team I drove!

Do n't talk to me of the barley-bree, that steeps in a still-
house damp;

There never was wine came out of the vine like the sap
of a sugar camp.

What are stately palms in the Syrian calms, or gardens
of olives dim,

To one who goes where the mighty rows of the maples
make way for him,

When the sap runs free as the melody of the robin above
the shed,

With the whole white earth beneath him and the whole
blue sky o'erhead?

For the happy man looks into the pan where the amber
sweetness swirls,

And sees the face and lightsome grace of the best of the
country girls,

And he seems to see that home to be, where, under the
well-trimmed lamp,

His wife doth wait, when he comes home late from work
in the sugar camp.

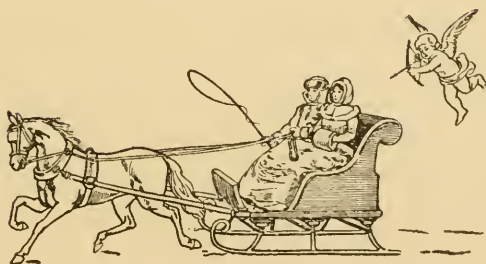
So he drives his sleigh down a winding way, along the
moonlit lanes,
To where the light of a farmhouse, bright, shines from
the window-panes;
Then, cuddled snug in the ample rug, o'er the snowy
roads they whirr,
While his sweetheart eats the spicy sweets he made that
day for her.
With tinkle of bells and song that swells, how gleaming
miles unroll;
And he tastes, so plain, the flavor again as he takes his
lover's toll;
For the sleigh is narrow, and one swift arrow from
Cupid, the rosy scamp,
Strikes man and maid from his ambushade as they circle
the sugar camp.

How he smiles next day, as he toils away stirring the
bubbling trough;
For he must wait to know his fate till the night of the
sugaring-off.
Cupid makes his bows of wood that grows in the sugar-
thicket's shade,
And dips each shaft, clear down to the haft, in the syrup
when 't is made.
So all ends right, and I say to-night, though we have
suffered and toiled,

We could both forget our sorrows yet in a dipper of sap
half-boiled.

When we get to heaven we'll kiss our folks, then start
for a happy tramp

Up toward the headwaters of Paradise, just to work in
the sugar camp.



THE COUNTRY ROAD



LD meandering country road,
to thy track I turn to-day,
Where the carven beeches spread, and the runnel slips
away,
To glint across the shallows and gleam around the
stones,
And to croon among the cresses in caressing undertones
That answer to the thrushes hid within the maple shade.
Toward the town the wagons creep, along the dusty
grade,
Where the old covered bridge, with catalpa blossoms
snowed,
Like an old-fashioned brooch, clasps the old country road.

I see the brood of butterflies that border every pool
Beneath the spreading elms, where the shadows are so
cool ;

And the rivulets of sheep, flowing slowly past the farms;
The ballad-singing shepherds bearing lambs in their
arms;

And the tawny tiger-lilies, their bells all spider-spun,
Each with bumble-bee for clapper, ringing matins to the
sun,

As I rode from the harvest-field upon the swaying load,
Brushed by the locust boughs on that old country road.

There is the little village, so old-fashioned and so snug,
With the highway's arm around it in the fatherliest hug,
Where each cottage wears at evening a smoky purple
dress,

With a selvedge of the sunset to set off its loveliness.
Above the door the roses bloom and hide the lintel
high,

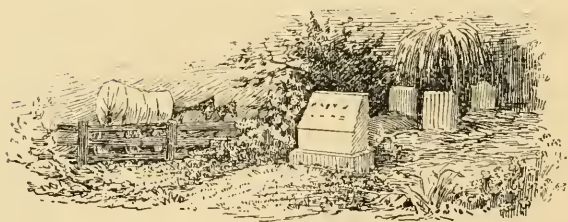
And along the fence the pansies make a pasture for the
eye,

While the open dressers preach all the hospitable code
Of the friendly ethics common on that old country road.

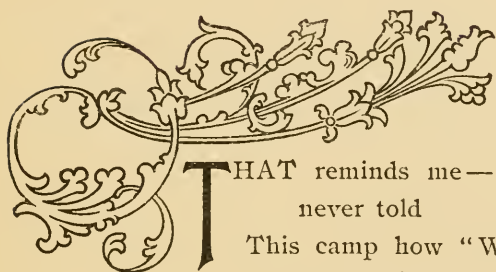
O if that weaver's lassie, rinsing linen white as snow,
Could whiten out my soul again as it was long ago;
O, perhaps, if I could press again that meadow with my
face,

I could cool my weary heart with the turf of that old
place;

And at the end of life, in that ancient burial-plot,
How sweet would be my slumber—all uncrowded and
forgot;
And I think sometimes my spirit, from its heavenly
abode,
Would come down and walk, at twilight, up that old
country road.



HIS SWEETHEART'S THROAT



THAT reminds me—I reckon I
never told
This camp how “Wes.” won a
medal of gold.

I can hear, to-night, the Chancellor say,
In the southern school down Georgia way,
“Whoever”—These beans are about the stuff,
But this bull-beef is so awful tough,
I can scarcely chew the gravy; and
This coffee is hot as a Texas brand,—
“Whoever is first on the final vote
Will hang his prize at his sweetheart’s throat.”

Well, I kept the tally, and I tell you
He roped that crowd as clever, and threw
It as clean as a steer that hits the sky,
In just two minutes from stirrup to tie.
I can see, in this crackling mesquite blaze,
The scene as it was in those old days;

HIS SWEETHEART'S THROAT

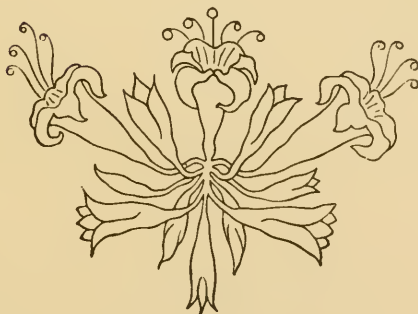
The handsome girls, high-born and rich,
Who beamed on the orators, wondering which
Would gain the glory, and then devote
His prize to hang at his sweetheart's throat.

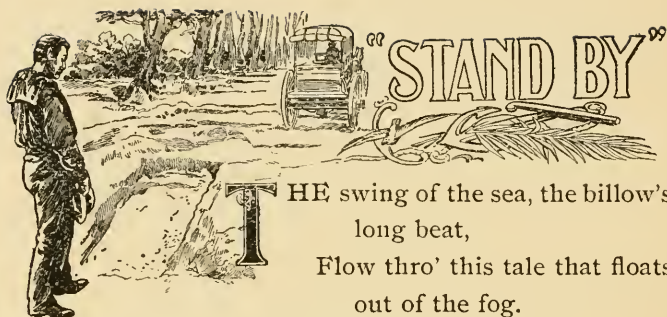
He is not a saint—he can bite a word
Into blazing brimstone when his herd
Is mavericked, and he told "Kid's" breed
That the timber-wolves on them would feed
If they lifted his—but I wish you all
Had seen that classic college hall
With fine old jewels, and fine new frocks,
And the boys in buckles and bushy locks,
When "Wes." came out, in his home-made coat,
To win the prize for his sweetheart's throat.

When he cleared the corral and took the track,
We all stood up, and shook the shack
With shouts for "Wes.," with his curly hair,
And his eye like the eye of a Pinto mare
For fire, and as slim as a yucca stem.
Stars! how he turned and swept at them,
With voice as sweet as the tinkling bell
On a Brazos spur, and a speech that fell
Like a silver riata, coiled to tote
Away that prize for his sweetheart's throat.

He pulled up the picket-pins, took the lead
Of that beautiful bunch in a wild stampede

Up the coulee to heaven and back again.
Well, I have seen women weep, and men,
But I say now, when "Wes." marched down
To his mother, in her linsey gown,
Who stood there waiting for a kiss,
And just took her weary hands in his,
We cried, and cheered, and howled, to note—
He hung his prize at his sweetheart's throat.





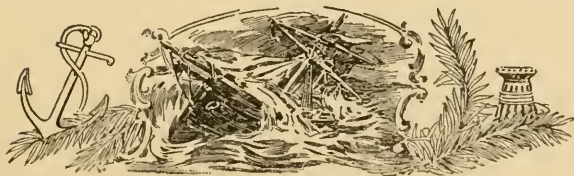
THE swing of the sea, the billow's
long beat,
Flow thro' this tale that floats
out of the fog.

A rude hearse was rattled along an old street;
No mourner was near it—not even a dog.
A wandering sailor, blown in from the wave,
Went up to the wagon that carried the dead,
Kept close behind till it came to the grave
Of the stranger, and stood with his uncovered head
Till the coffin was covered, heaved a deep sigh,
And said, “I thought some one should just ‘stand by.’”

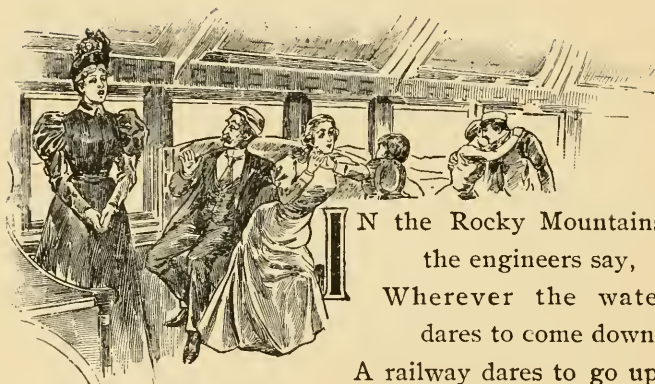
Hear the moan of the blast, the rain on the beach,
Curlew's cry thro' the spray, in this man's gentle
deed.
Did the wail of his weanlings, who wait for him, teach
This sun-browned old saint such a heavenly creed?
Did some fell affliction his own life had felt
Scud o'er his sad soul as the pauper went past?

Did unspeakable loss make his sympathy melt
 For a poor, friendless mortal, forsaken at last?
 Did a sob sag his breast, or a tear wet his eye?
 I know not, and care not, because he "stood by."

"Stood by" all alone on that wide village road;
 "Stood by" in the bonds of the great brotherhood;
 "Stood by" in the grand old Samaritan code
 That 't is fine to be friendly, 't is good to do good.
 Heaven bless him, and bear him with favoring gales
 To his far-away home. Should the wild tempest
 smite,
 When waves take his deck and winds take his sails,
 Surely One will walk near in the watch of the night.
 Who will say to him softly, "Fear not, it is I.
 I saw thee that day and have come to 'stand by.'"



"HE LEADETH ME"



I N the Rocky Mountains,
the engineers say,
Wherever the water
dares to come down,
A railway dares to go up;
and they

Coil around the loftiest Titan's crown
The loops of the lasso of winding track;
And up this Romeo ladder they glide,
To smirch with the murk of the smoky stack
The stainless hue of the clouds that hide
The brow of old Blanco, scarred with age,
Where we rode that night on the "narrow gauge."

Startled, we heard the shrill whistle scream,
And flocks of echoes, scared by its breath,
Fluttered and flew thro' the hissing steam.
Near was the summit, but nearer Death

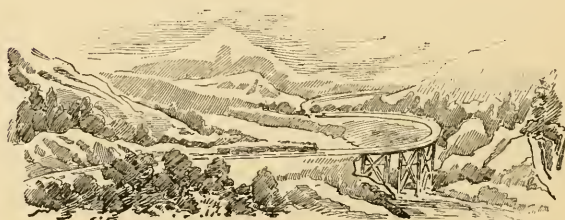
Stood beckoning us. We felt the lurch,
 And heard the brave engine wrench and strain,
 Then backward, down from the eagle perch
 To the far-off valley reeled the train.
 Fear blanched our faces, when one outspoke:
 "Leap for your lives! the coupling's broke."

"The brakes are useless," another one cried,
 As into the gorge, with a cosmic whirr,
 We fell. Let the poets tell the night-ride
 Of Paul Revere, with his red-wet spur;
 Or Sheridan, when the long race was done,
 Smiting Defeat on his boastful face;
 Of the three who started when only one
 Brought the good news from Ghent to Aix;
 But the thrill of them all was in our veins,
 Swept from the peak to the distant plains.

We followed the foamy stream, and swerved
 Where white stars lay in emerald deeps;
 Roared through snow-sheds; leaned and curved;
 Hung pendulous over the crumbling steep;
 Like a meteor burning the midnight air
 Swayed inward, scouring the granite bank;
 While, crashing amid the cries of prayer,
 Torn from its moorings, the water-tank
 Was hurled and tossed in the clanging car
 That bore us away to the judgment-bar.

One slip or stumble would surely fling
Us all through the gate of eternity,
When a white-haired woman began to sing
That ancient lyric, "He Leadeth Me."
No wavering air, but clear and full
It rose and fell on that fearsome din,
Triumphant as swims a gleaming gull
Through the ocean storm she revels in.
Our cradle rocking, the Lord beat time,
And we were swinging to that old rhyme.

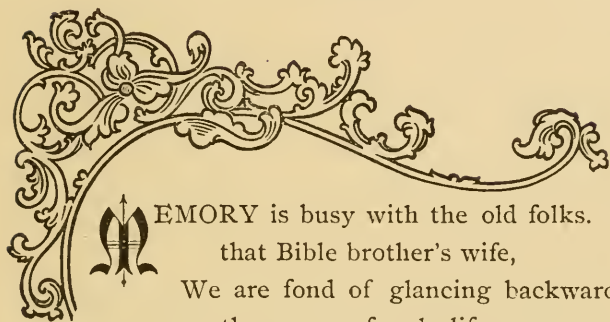
Her faith laid hold on the Father's arm;
We joined the chorus, and cast our fears
To the howling winds; there could be no harm.
With the seas, and suns, and choiring spheres,
We swung harmonious, rhythmic sweet,
In the heavenly temple vague and vast;
We clung, like little ones, to His feet
Till safely stopped on the plain at last.
As the train descended our souls had trod
Up the ladder of song to the throne of God.





WHERE THE OAK LOG CROSSED THE STREAM

WHERE THE OAK LOG CROSSED THE STREAM



EMORY is busy with the old folks. Like
that Bible brother's wife,
We are fond of glancing backward o'er
the scenes of early life;
And to-night, while sitting musing, when the dusk was
coming down,
I forgot the children playing, and the murmur of the
town.
When you called me I was driving, thro' the bars and
down the lane,
That faithful cow of father's, walking by her once again,
With my sun-tanned arm caressing her neck's soft vel-
vet skin,
And telling her the secrets and the sorrows hid within
The deep heart of a laddie, when she turned and licked
my hand,
And breathed clover-scented comfort any boy could
understand.

O a whiff of mint and pennyroyal upon the air did seem
To blow from Brindle's pasture, where the oak log
crossed the stream.

She would meditate a moment, then the coolest place
would seek,
Where swaying willow branches trailed their fringes in
the creek,
And then set her agate hoofs in the gravel's polished
gold,
To dip her dappled muzzle where the violet ripples
rolled;
And such long, delicious drinking, such a thankful up-
ward look,
As she plashed, with dripping nostrils, to the margin of
the brook;
Then a cloud of mist upblown, and a low, deep-chested
moan,
A kind of humble dumb thanksgiving and returning God
his own;
Then along the road together we meandered, slow and
still,
Where katydid was calling figures for the fire-flies'
quadrille,
And I was wandering in haunted lands of legend and of
dream,
While coming thro' the shadows where the oak log
crossed the stream.

I am thinking much this season of the glad old long
ago;
Perhaps I am failing, Helen, dear old wife, I hardly
know,
And there may be sin in looking back; that Scripture
sister went
Thro' a lot of trouble by it—had a dreadful punishment—
But if she was as happy and half as full of high delight
While looking o'er her shoulder as I am this blessed
night,
Perhaps the end was peaceful. If I was sure I had to
die,
And never see another sun arise across the eastern sky,
I would like to meet the river—the darksome flood of
death—
Beside that twilight village road, and, with my parting
breath,
Say good-bye to all my loved ones, with the other shore
agleam,
And wade out from earth forever where the oak log
crossed the stream.





O CHRISTMAS Day,
O Christmas Day!
O Babe, who in the
manger lay,
Once more thy star its splendor spills
Across the sleeping Syrian hills,
Once more the strange old story thrills
The mind of man, till, sweet and clear,
Our songs run round the board, whose cheer
Makes laughing children leap, and say,
"O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!"

O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!
How selfishness doth melt away!
All eyes with kindly joy do shine,
All lips say "yours," instead of "mine;"
All hearts receive the Child divine,

Whose dimpled hands do now caress
This sad old world in tenderness;
 Blue breaks through the skies of gray,
 O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!

O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!
How every year doth spread the sway
 Of that dear King whose humble birth
 Awoke the anthem "Peace on earth,"
 And taught the weary world the worth
That in the lowly soul may dwell
Where rules the Prince Immanuel,
 When Love has had his wondrous way,
 O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!

O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!
All hate and envy thou dost slay;
 Buried deep beneath the snow,
 Hid by holly and mistletoe,
 O'er them advent angels go.
Hark to the choir of chiming bells!
This is the story the steeple tells:
 God has come to this world to stay,
 O Christmas Day, O Christmas Day!

"HIS MARK"



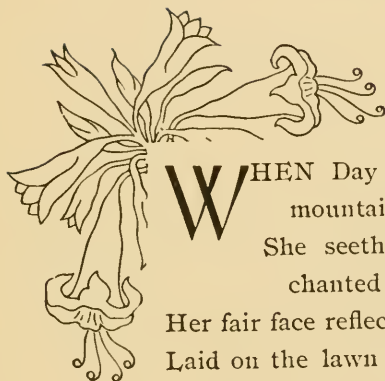
IT is told of Angelo, that once he came
Into the lowly cottage of a friend,
And found it empty ; yet he left no name,
But one great curve did swiftly bend
On the blank canvas near.

When, on return, his comrade did ex-
claim,
"Behold, the Buonarotti hath been here !"

I saw a splendid rainbow span the sky
With its mysterious and mighty arch ;
In stately grandeur sweeping heaven high,
O'er which a tempest, with majestic
march,
In thunderous music trod.

"Lo, this small studio, our world,"
said I,
"Hath this day had a visit from our God."

“MIRROR LAKE”



WHEN Day cometh over the dim
mountain tops,
She seeth, far down in the en-
chanted copse,
Her fair face reflected in that magic glass
Laid on the lawn where the Merced doth
doth pass.

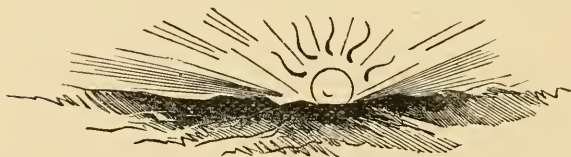
Lo, the vale hangs inverted, enfolded in firs,
Thro' fathoms of crystal the soaring lark whirrs,
And seemeth to sink into eternity
In the marvelous mirror of Yosemite.

She lingereth there, o'er the sky lintel bent,
And seeth beneath her the blue firmament,
Watching the mists of the morning that scale
The path of the winding and perilous trail,
The steeps of the Sierra's gray monochrome,
The storm-smitten summit of awful South Dome,
When by the great portal of red porphyry
The sun drives his car into Yosemite.

"MIRROR LAKE"

Below, in clear water, the tall turrets swing,
The bold cedar-trees to the terraces cling,
 The sevenfold rainbow is flinging its span
 From Bridal Veil Falls unto El Capitan.
As spun by the sun from the foamy cascade,
When arching across the aërial glade,
 It looks like the girder of God's balcony,
 From which He looks down into Yosemite.

Sometimes in the dawning the clouds seem to stand
On a far-away ledge, like an angelic band
 That pauses in flight, on the opaline verge
 Where the sky and the snow into mystery merge;
Then Day to the seraphs shouts o'er the abyss,
"O shining and sinless ones, answer me this:
 Can aught in your heaven of heavens e'er be
 As sublime as this splendor of Yosemite?"



“AT EARLY CANDLE-LIGHT”



THERE is no night in heaven,"
so the circuit-rider said;
Now, blessings on his saintly
heart, and on his silver head,
He little knew how I had
dreamed, when all my work
was done,
Of meeting, in my Father's
house my long-lost little one.

O how my yearning soul shall miss—if heaven has no
night—

That hour of all hours the best, "the early candle-light!"

I know the dawn is lovely when the rosy wreaths of
cloud

Fall into purple furrows which the sun has newly plowed;
The prairie, like an open hearth, on which the day doth
kneel

To blow the coals of morning into splendors that reveal
The colors that are curled within the woven mists of
white,

But 't is not so hushed and holy as "the early candle-
light."

And sweet the noon in summer, when thro' the lattice
blows

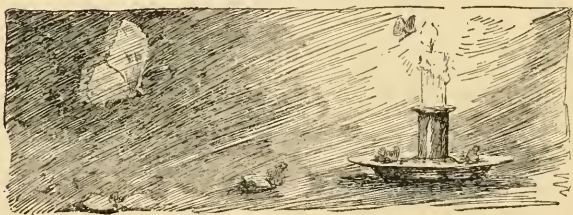
The wind that softly whispers where the cool clematis
grows;

The wheat within the valley bending in the breeze,
And drowsy cattle wading the tarn among the trees,
The eagle o'er them sailing thro' the sky of lazulite,
But it can not bring the comfort of "the early candle-
light."

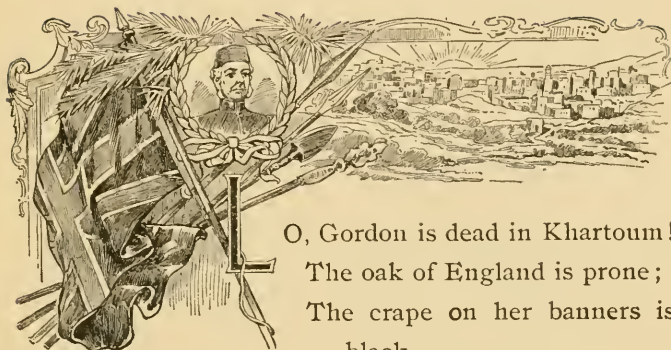
Oft I picture eve in heaven, where not a leaf doth stir,
When every harp grows silent, hushed each lute and
dulcimer;

Where, thro' the quiet twilight, down a path of Paradise,
Toward the gate comes baby Kate, with gladness in her
eyes,

And on the paneled pearl lifts the latch of jasper bright,
To greet me there when home I fare "at early candle-
light."



“ DEAD IN KHARTOUM ”



O, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!
The oak of England is prone;
The crape on her banners is
black,

The step of her legions is slack;
Upholding her banner alone
He has gone to his glorious doom.
Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!

Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!
The damp of the Nile on his brow.
Great Britain, the fateful eclipse
That lies on his eyes and his lips
Tells thee how he kept his vow.
Death came as a bride to a groom.
Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!

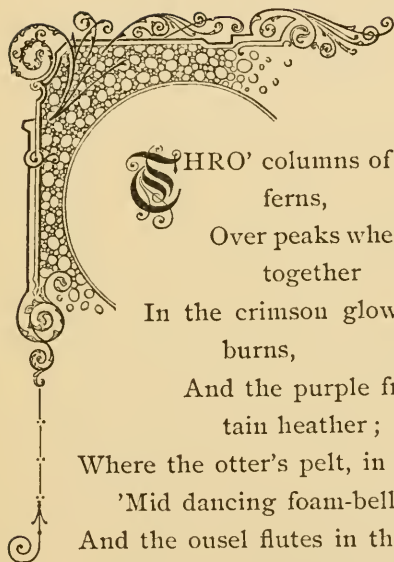
"DEAD IN KHARTOUM"

Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!
His toil is all over and past.
O Albion, could'st thou but fold
His form with thy warriors old!
Thou kept the best till the last;
Now afar he goes into the gloom.
Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!

Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!
But our children shall wear his name.
Egypt, take him to hold and keep;
In thy pyramid let him sleep
With thy worthies of ancient fame—
For him will thy gods make room.
Lo, Gordon is dead in Khartoum!



THE OLD TRAIL



THRO' columns of cedars begirt with
ferns,
Over peaks where the piñons climb
together

In the crimson glow where the sunset
burns,

And the purple fringe of the moun-
tain heather ;

Where the otter's pelt, in the emerald pool,
'Mid dancing foam-bells dives and glistens,
And the ousel flutes in the aspens cool,

Where the dappled deer, affrighted listens,
When she hears our hoof-beats, far away,
Runs the famous old trail to Santa Fé.

A highway to heaven. The bearded and strong
Left white-topped wagons and weary cattle,
And, bidding this sad old world "So long,"
Their souls went out in the Indian battle,

Set free by the red Apache spears.

In clumps of cactus their bones are sleeping,
Strewn with the skeletons of their steers,
And a rattlesnake in the white ribs creeping
Makes a gruesome epitaph, Mate, I say,
For a freighter who fought on the Santa Fé.

Those tunicked old settlers were clear grit,
And I reckon their women even stancher
Of soul, if a fellow will cipher it.

You mind that home of the murdered rancher;
In the crumbling corner the rifle stands,
With a rotten strap and a rusty buckle;
But where is the wife, whose loving hands
Trained over the porch that honeysuckle?
And where are the babes who used to play
'Neath its scented shade on the Santa Fé?

You have not forgotten the ford, I know;
That wagon-corral, and the log-fires in it;
"Old Baldy," lifting his brow of snow,
As white as your honest head this minute.
O the yarns we spun, the songs we sung
Of "home, sweet home" and blue Juniata,
While up in the pines the new moon hung,
And—pshaw, old partner, what's the matter?
Does it hurt you yet, when your hair is gray,
What she said that night on the Santa Fé?

Well, he went down at your elbow, Dave,
In that midnight fracas across the carry;
You helped us heap up the lonely grave
In the cottonwood grove, over handsome Harry.
We found him dead underneath his steed,
With his empty sixes and stained serape,
Just as he fell when the mad stampede
Flung far from him these two unhappy
Old chums, who tell of that red affray
With tears, as they think of the Santa Fé.

Gone, stirrup, riata, and rowel-bell;
The bellowing herd, in its wild commotion;
The breathless rush, from the chaparral,
Over the sweep of that grassy ocean.
But yet, my comrade, the road is etched
On the flowery prairie, fresh and vernal;
And, dear old friend, when we are fetched,
By Death, beyond the white range eternal,
We will wind to the realms of endless day
Up the shining trail of the Santa Fé.



O CHRISTMAS TREE



THE Palm is the king of the lands
of the sun,
And his tousled plumes are
tossed

Where the wild gazelles the
winds outrun,
On the marge of the mirage
lost.

He stands as straight as a
temple shaft,
And his laughing leafage
green

Flings fragrant shade on the fountain, quaffed
By the wandering Bedoueen.

But no palm-fruit, when peeled, can be
As sweet as the fruit of the Christmas Tree.

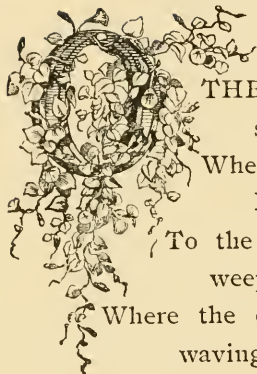
The Oak is the king of the lands of the corn;
When the tempest clouds the skies,
And walks the world in splendid scorn,
How its wrath the oak defies!
He stands serene, elect, apart,
And he drinks, from a dewy knoll,

The sap that sings in his shaggy heart
And strengthens his stout old soul.
Tho' he boasts of the proudest pedigree,
He doffs his crown to the Christmas Tree.

The Pine is the king of the lands of snow,
Sole lord of the leagues of hills
Where the stars in shining clusters grow,
And the moon its splendor spills
On the edge of the earth's gray parapet,
Where he taketh the dawn's red torch
To rekindle the east. This warder, set
By the pillars of God's white porch,
Thro' the gates ajar can often see,
In the Father's house, the Christmas Tree.

As the kings of old, on their bended knees,
Bowed down to the Babe divine,
To-day behold these high-born trees—
The Palm, the Oak, and the Pine—
Come over the hills to Bethlehem,
With their gifts of spicery,
Lo, while the star that guideth them
Its refulgence throws on thee.
The Christmas bells fling, wild and free,
Thy "Peace on earth," O Christmas Tree!

EASTER MORNING



THE dawn of Easter morning! O the
sad, sweet day,
When thro' the laughing lilies loving
Mary went her way
To the place where He was buried, to
weep beside His tomb,
Where the cedar and the willow tree were
waving in the gloom,
And the myrtle and the almond tree were budding into
bloom.

Upon her wistful forehead all the waking wonder shone
When she saw the gracious angel sitting on the guarded
stone,

When she heard him softly say,
"Lo, your Master is not dead; He is risen, as He said,"
In the dawn of Easter morning. O the sad, sweet day!

O the dawn of Easter morning! O the sad, sweet day!
When Jesus conquered Death alone, and ended all his
sway.

List! how Magdalene is calling all the weary world to
her,

Where she holds the bruised cassia, the balsam and the
myrrh,
And stands with gaze enraptured by the open sepulcher.
See the snowy linen folded, which he nevermore will
need,
Hear the happy woman telling that "The Lord is risen
indeed."

Now the shouting Christian may
Stand within that vault and sing, "O Death, where is
thy sting?"
In the dawn of Easter morning. O the sad, sweet day!

O the dawn of Easter morning! O the sad, sweet day!
When we were all delivered from dominion of the clay.
Within that burial-garden how the heart grows calm;
How the bough of cypress changes into the branch of
palm;
How the wailing requiem rises into the wedding psalm,
Because our great Emmanuel, the grave could not con-
tain,

Comes back to be a comrade with his own elect again.

In the dusky sunrise gray
Looks and speech are just the same, calling Mary by
her name
In the dawn of Easter morning. O the sad, sweet day!

O the dawn of Easter morning! O the sad, sweet day!
When the resurrection glory on the urn doth play.

"Let not your heart be troubled, your place I will prepare ;

For you must be beside Me now, wherever I may fare.
Henceforward all My blessedness My bride will surely share."

O Savior, there is nothing in Thy happy heaven above
That we desire a portion in so much as in Thy love.

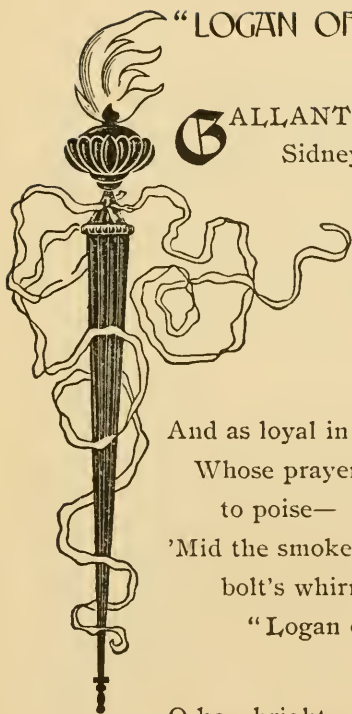
Often hast Thou heard us pray,

"Eloi, when all the race is run, welcome us with Thy
'Well done,'"

In the dawn of Easter morning. O the sad, sweet day !



"LOGAN OF ILLINOIS"



GALLANT brother to Bayard, and
Sidney, and they
Who galloped in glory so
long ago,
Like them, without fear or
reproach, I say,
With as steady a soul,
and as stout a blow,
And as loyal in love which he gave to her
Whose prayers were the pinions of faith,
to poise—
'Mid the smoke, and the din, and the death-
bolt's whirr—
"Logan of Illinois."

O how bright was his sword when he broke
a path

Where the bristling bayonets slivered the sun
Into splinters of gold, as he rode in wrath
And never drew rein till the field was won.

"LOGAN OF ILLINOIS"

Like a snow-suckled stream from a crag-crest flung,
One sudden precipitate shaft of turquoise,
Born of a breed that old Homer has sung,
"Logan of Illinois."

It was splendid to see him sweep into the fight,
With his dominant figure and dauntless air,
To speed his flight and to cheer the right
When the shout of his soldiers shook the air,
As he plowed his way to the perilous place
At the battery's breast with his Western boys,
His great soul lighting his glorious face,
"Logan of Illinois."

O thou Prairie State, he is dear to you—
This knightly one who has lately gone
To sit in the temple beside the two
Who sleep by the Hudson and Sangamon.
In the Hall of the Heroes thy children meet;
High fame the proud mother enjoys,
Who has Lincoln to welcome and Grant to greet
"Logan of Illinois."

OUR WHITE LADYE

In Memory of Frances Elizabeth Willard—1839-1898



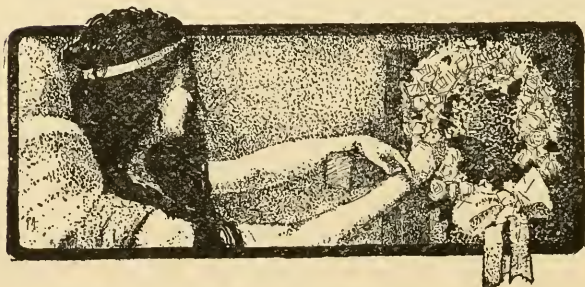
PALE she lies, in sweet repose!
Not whitelier lie the winter snows
On this sad earth. From her cold
brow
Unloose the braided myrtles now,
And bind the wreath of cypress there.
Put lilies in her hands and hair;
Come, gather round her, ye who stand
"For God, and home, and native land."

Doth thine anointed vision see,
Brave daughter of democracy,
How Church and State together bow
Above thy casket, weeping now?
They loved thee so, best of our best,
Thou Miriam of the mighty West,

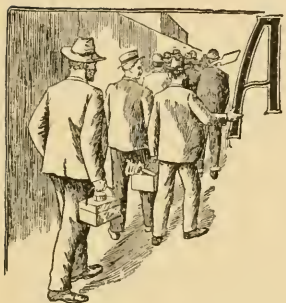
Who dauntless led thy deathless band
"For God, and home, and native land."

No woman cried, "O Lord, how long?"
But thou fared forth to right her wrong;
No man went, shackled, down to hell
But on his gyves thy hot tears fell.
Thou this old world in ribbons white
Didst lift, as loops of cosmic light—
Upbear it in the Almighty Hand
"For God, and home, and native land."

White Ladye, though before thine eyes
The portals fair of Paradise
Unfold on thine enraptured view
The heaven that shone thy white soul thro',
Though high the victor's anthem swells
Where thou dost walk the asphodels,
Still shalt thou lead us, still command
"For God, and home, and native land."



THE BREADWINNERS' BALLAD



T the break of day and the set of
sun we hear their heavy tread,
God's old brigade, all undis-
mayed, they battle for daily
bread ;

And they laugh to know that,
long ago, the Lord of life and
death

Fared forth at dawn, and home at dusk, with them in
Nazareth.

Foreheads white for lack of light, or brows all brown
with grime,

Their garments black with soot and slack, or gray with
mason's lime,

They ring the trowel, push the plane, they travel the
stormy deep,

They click the type and clang the press when loved
ones are asleep ;

Thro' the city street and the country lane their lusty
voices ring,

By the roaring forge in the mountain gorge this cheery
song they sing :

*O we march away in the early morn,
As we did since the world began.
Do n't muzzle the ox that treadeth the corn;
Leave a share for the working-man.*

Some are workmen coarse and strong, and some are
craftsmen fine;
They set the plow, they steer the raft, they sweat in
sunless mine,
They lift the sledge and drive the wedge, they hide
with cunning art
The powder where the spark can tear the mountain's
stubborn heart,
They reap the fields of ripened grain and fill the lands
with bread,
They make the ore give up its gold beneath the stamp-
mill's tread,
They spread the snowy sail aloft, they sweep the drip-
ping seine,
They waft the wife a fond farewell, and ne'er come
home again.

*But they march away in the early morn,
As they did since the world began.
Do n't muzzle the ox that treadeth the corn;
Leave a share for the working-man.*

They make the fiery furnace flow in streams of spouting steel,
They bend the planks and brace the ribs along the oaken keel,
They fold the flock, they feed the herd, they in the forest hew,
And with the whetstone on the scythe beat labor's sweet tattoo,
They climb the coping, swing the crane, and set the capstone high,
They stretch the heavy bridge that hangs a roadway in the sky,
They speed the shuttle, spin the thread, and weave the silken weft,
Or, crushed to death amid the wreck, they leave the home bereft.

*But they march away in the early morn,
As they did since the world began.
Don't muzzle the ox that treadeth the corn;
Leave a share for the working-man.*

In ancient days they were but serfs, and by the storied Nile—
Unhappy hordes!—they drew the cords around the heathen pile;
Where Karnak, Tyre, and Carthage stood, where rolls Euphrates' wave,

Grim gods looked down, with stony frown, upon the
hapless slave.

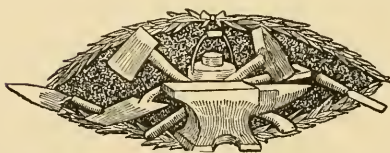
That day is past, thank Heaven! No more does Man
the Toiler bow

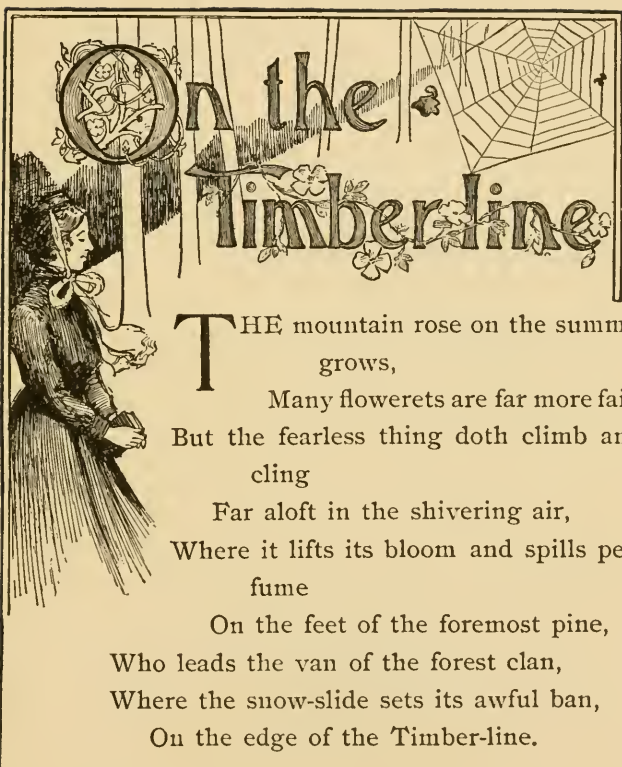
His mighty head with fear and dread; for he is master
now.

His hand is strong, his patience long, his wholesome
blood is calm,

Within his soul sits peace enthroned, and on his lips
this psalm:

*O we march away in the early morn,
As we did since the world began;
Do n't muzzle the ox that treadeth the corn;
Leave a share for the working-man.*





THE mountain rose on the summit
grows,

Many flowerets are far more fair,
But the fearless thing doth climb and
cling

Far aloft in the shivering air,
Where it lifts its bloom and spills per-
fume

On the feet of the foremost pine,
Who leads the van of the forest clan,
Where the snow-slide sets its awful ban,
On the edge of the Timber-line.

Lo, a maid doth dwell on the rim of hell,
In the end of a sin-cursed street,
Where the sneers are sped about her head
And the snares set for her feet;

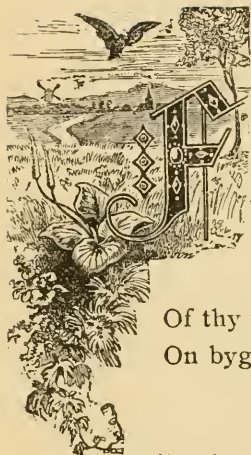
ON THE TIMBER-LINE

Tho' lust may lower, no sweeter flower
Ever grew on an avenue fine,
And her heart doth ache to heal and make
Their souls all white for His dear sake
On the edge of the timber-line.

Lo, a man doth stand in the borderland,
Where he battles for daily bread
For his children's sake, and doth calmly stake
His all on his God o'erhead.
Be strong, my brother, some day or other
His saints will the stars outshine;
We shall with Him sup, He will fill the cup,
And His own right hand shall lift us up
From the edge of the timber-line.



SASSAFRAS



AIN'T as the sighing winds which
fret
With sweet and subtle harmonies
The silken strands æolian, set
In mullions old, come memories
That thrill and pass,
Of thy wild bole, which warder stood
On bygone bournes. Our sandal-wood,
Slim sassafras.

Like that green tree of life thou sprang
From out the turf of Paradise,
The heaven of boyhood, but thy tang
Of bark and root among the wise
Tall trees, alas!
With leafy laughter did infect
The woods at thy quaint dialect,
Rude sassafras.

Thy spicy root had virtue rare
The blood to purge and purify;
But now, amid my toil and care,
My mind hath medicine, for I

Feel all the crass
And evil humors of my soul
Cast off, and thou hast made me whole,
Rare sassafras.

If, some blest day, when I shall rove
By God's great river, all alone,
Thy breath, from out the healing grove,
Across the hills is softly blown,
And o'er the grass,
The tears that blur my sight shall be
Love's tribute then to youth and thee,
O sassafras.



“FOUR FEET ON THE FENDER”



OUR pictures I see, in a frame quaint and
olden,
Aglow in the twilight, half-gloomy, half-
golden,
Where big beechen logs, all the fireplace
filling,
From out their rude caskets their rubies are
spilling,
To roll o'er the hearth in a river of glory.
The wind in the chimney is crooning a story;
On walls and on ceiling the shadows are shifting,
And down the wide flue a few snowflakes are sifting,
Where brother and sister sit, winsome and slender,
And face answers face, with "four feet on the fender."

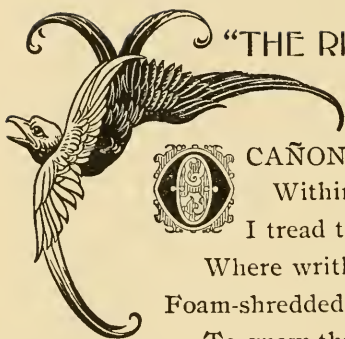
Then later I see a young man and young maiden,
Whose low, wooing language with fervor is laden.
I hear his fond question, in fear and in trembling,
Her gracious reply, without guile or dissembling;
Then every blithe robin that ever had nested
Within the brave beech-tree, or ever had rested
Inside its green tent, when it stood in the thicket,
Seemed singing again with the shrill little cricket.
O sweet was their song when the lass did surrender,
And hand answered hand, with "four feet on the fender!"

Once more I can see the same happy pair mated,
Enclosed in the Paradise love has created.
Around them the children, with riotous laughter,
Flood all the old room, from the rug to the rafter.
They play in the splendor the fire is flinging
Across the broad floor, and the kettle is singing
Its cheery defi to the storm that is piling
The gables with snow, and the wee baby, smiling
In dear mother's arms, makes the father's face tender,
And heart answers heart, with "four feet on the fender."

We sing of the Paradise where we are going;
O fair are its gardens, with pure waters flowing,
The amaranths blooming, the azure skies arching
Above the white host of the ransomed ones marching!
But I, sitting here, in my loneliness yearning
For one who has gone whence there is no returning,

Oft picture that place as my own Father's
dwelling,
Where she whom I love to the angels is
telling
That kindly old Death soon her sweetheart
will send her,
And heaven will begin with "four feet on
the fender.





"THE RIVER OF LOST SOULS"



CAÑON of Las Animas!

Within thy porphyry portals dim,
I tread thy gloomy gorge; I pass
Where writhen waters roaring swim,
Foam-shredded, down the dark abyss,
To gnaw thy gnarly granite roots,
And, round thy boulders curling, kiss
The sandals of the lordly buttes
That gaze upon thee, with the glow
Of sunset on their scalps of snow,
Grim warders of thy grand crevasse,
O Rio de las Perdidas!
Wild Cañon of Las Animas!

O Cañon of Las Animas!

Cut saber-wise clean to the core,
Sword-keen thy skyey cataract has
Cleft all thy cloudy ledges hoar,
In one fell sweep, from frost to flower.
Aloft, old Winter surpliced sits;
Aloft, the wolf-cubs crouch and cower
When thro' the reek the raven flits;

From where, on thy sheer parapet,
The white stars nightly walk vidette
 To the green pools wherein they glass
 Their glory in Las Perdidas—
Wild Cañon of Las Animas!

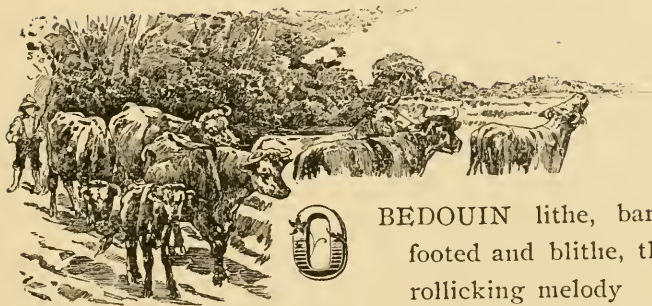
O Cañon of Las Animas!
 Thro' shambles of the slaughtered souls
Thy river of the lost, alas!
 Scuds swiftly o'er skull-paven shoals,
Where tethered shades eternally
 Scroll all thy sagging, sunless cliffs
With God's name, whom they can not see
 In Hades' hopeless hieroglyphs,
Looking, all dumb and nettle-crowned,
Upon the blue face of the drowned,
 Gyved hand and foot with graveyard grass
 By Rio de las Perdidas—
Wild Cañon of Las Animas!

O Cañon of Las Animas!
 Now is this lying legend peeled
From thy great fame forever, as
 A ripe fig-skin, and thou revealed
Sublimest Nature's holiest shrine,
 Where spirits, free from sinful dross,
Look up, to see above them shine
 The "Mountain of the Holy Cross,"

Linteled with heaven and silver-silled,
Thy templed dome forever filled
With songs whose cadences surpass
The strong voice of Las Perdidas
Wild Cañon of Las Animas! —



THE WHISTLING BOY



BEDOUIN lithe, bare-
footed and blithe, the
rollicking melody

Which through thy lips so lightsome slips is the ballad
of "Rosalie,

The Prairie Flower," and gracious power within the
ancient tune

Brings back the day when I rode away, in the buxom
month of June,

When the slender stalks of the hollyhocks lifted the
blooms so high

Above the wall that they shouted all, "Good-bye, my
lover, good-bye!"

And in tunic yellow a wild bird, mellow and mad with
tipsy joy,

Tilted the rhyme of his tuneful chime to the lilt of a
whistling boy.

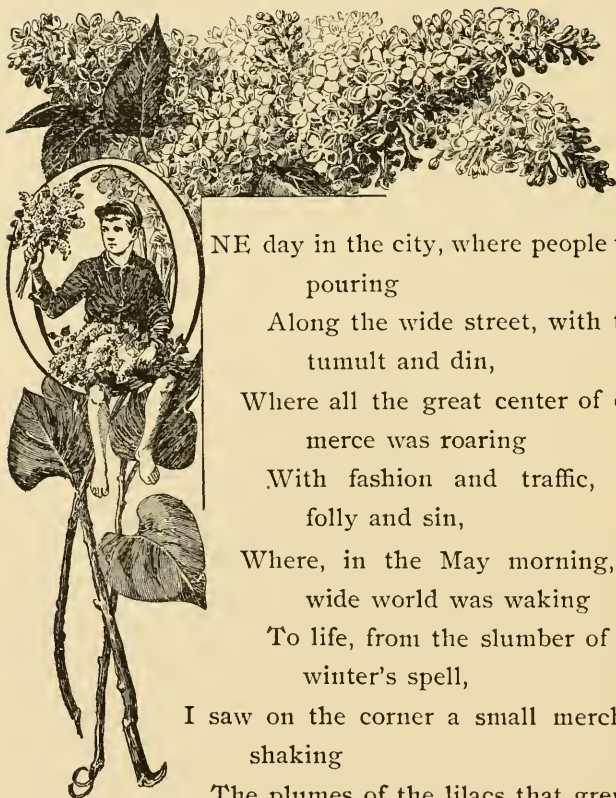
No meadow-lark in the misty dark, when winging her
upward way
From cloud to cloud, and caroling loud to waken the
sleeping day;
No whippoorwill in the twilight still, lamenting in
lonely shade,
Where fireflies seek for her and peek into every glim-
mering glade;
No slave refrain, with a warp of pain and a weft of
psalm between;
No aria, trilled to audience thrilled by the art of the
opera queen;
No shepherd's hail in a hawthorn vale; no mariner's
"Home ahoy!"
Wets my eyes like thoughts that rise with the lilt of a
whistling boy.

Thro' happy tears, across the years, on the lowland farm
I see,
Driving his line of lowing kine, the laddie that once
was me,
Whistling clear, to the thrushes near, that cheery,
quaint old strain,
Loitering slow, in the long ago, with the herd along
the lane.
They say that some, when death has come, and all life's
toil is o'er,

On the river brim have heard a hymn float up from the
farther shore ;
But at the ford one low, sweet chord will all my fear
destroy
If, over the tide from the other side, comes the lilt of a
whistling boy.



“THE LILACS”



NE day in the city, where people were
pouring
Along the wide street, with their
tumult and din,
Where all the great center of com-
merce was roaring
With fashion and traffic, with
folly and sin,
Where, in the May morning, the
wide world was waking
To life, from the slumber of cold
winter's spell,
I saw on the corner a small merchant,
shaking
The plumes of the lilacs that grew by
the well.

The tall purple lilacs, the sweet-scented lilacs,
 The old-fashioned lilacs that grew by the well.

I looked, and behold the high buildings all faded
 To far-away hills where the firmament bent,
 And the avenue changed to a river-road shaded
 By elms, in whose shadows my naked feet went.
 A thrush in the thicket was singing a sonnet;
 Adrift on the breezes, I caught the faint smell
 That came from the bush with the dew diamonds on it,
 Which lifted its blossoms beside the old well.
 The tall purple lilacs, the sweet-scented lilacs,
 The old-fashioned lilacs that grew by the well.

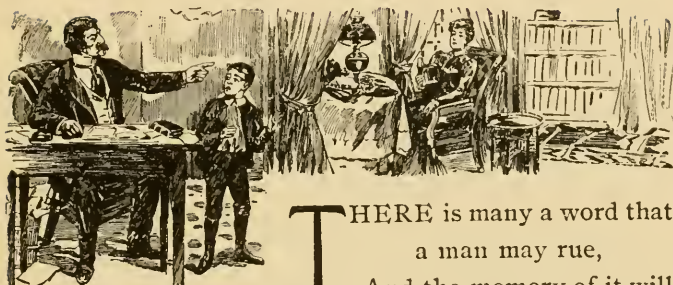
My weary old spirit waxed younger each minute,
 I flung forty years from my soul when I laughed,
 For there was the well, and the face that was in it
 When over the curbing I gazed in the shaft.
 The squeaky old windlass the same thing was thinking;
 The opal drops into the deep crystal fell;
 While I, from a dipper deliciously drinking,
 Looked up at the lilacs that grew by the well.
 The tall purple lilacs, the sweet-scented lilacs,
 The old-fashioned lilacs that grew by the well.

And then I saw mother, just as she was leaving
 This sorrowful world for the land of the blest,
 There in her room, where we children were grieving,
 And saying farewell to our first friend and best;

When wistful she gazed where the summer sun slanted,
And, whispering softly, she told us to tell
Good-bye to the roses her patient hands planted,
Good-bye to the lilacs that grew by the well.
The tall purple lilacs, the sweet-scented lilacs,
The old-fashioned lilacs that grew by the well.



“WHAT YOU DID NOT SAY”



THERE is many a word that
a man may rue,
And the memory of it will
make him weep.

Mayhap some heart that is kind and true,
Like a red pomegranate is rent in two,
When out of the soul the passions leap.
Storming the portals of speech they rush
Into cruel words that condemn and crush ;
But the pang that you never may know, I pray,
Is the woe of the word that you did not say.

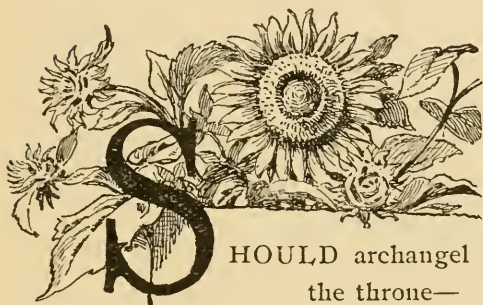
The word that you ought to have said to him
Who put up his pleading face to ask
For a father's smile, and whose eyes went dim
With tears at your answer, stern and grim :
“ O let me alone till I end my task.”

Now he vexes no more ; yet you often go
To the grave of the lad you slighted so,
And call thro' the grass to the quiet clay,
And sob out the word that you did not say.

The word you ought to have said to her
Whom, long ago, you did lovingly woo
With gifts and graces ; but tears now blur
The sight of the bloom of the lavender,
That brings old summers again, and you.
How she lists and longs for the tender tone
Of the days gone by ! When you stand alone,
Your face in her lilies you then will lay,
And wail out the word that you did not say.

The word you ought to have said—the dear
Old pair by the fireside need it so !
It is better to speak, more blessed to hear,
Your word of praise while they both are near.
How free would your filial affection flow,
If you knew how we, who without them trod
All the way of life, are entreating God,
Who took them from us, that some time they
In heaven may hear what we did not say.

“HARDSCRABBLE AND HIGHSTEEPLE”



HOULD archangel Gabriel, nearest
the throne—

The resplendent clasp of that glittering zone
Which girdeth forever the glory above
With angelic anthems and lyrics of love,
The leader of all the great legions who wait
On the will and the word of the Uncreate—
Come flying to-morrow with tidings again
Of peace upon earth and good will unto men,
Seeking the shepherds would he, in his search,
Try Hardscrabble Chapel or Highsteeple Church?

From harmonious surges of that choral sea
Emerging, and glowing with rapture, would he
Look for fisherman Peter, tunicked and tanned,
Or publican Matthew, branded and banned;

The harlot whose tears, on the feet of her Lord,
Flowed like the oil the Samaritan poured;
Or that weary mother whose eloquence won
Her daughter to health; or the prodigal son;
Or Zaccheus, leaving his sycamore perch,—
In Hardscrabble Chapel or Highsteeple Church?

Would he see those who sought the Master of old;
The lost sheep He carried from far to the fold;
The sinner whom bloodthirsty Pharisees claimed;
The blind and the halt, the withered and maimed;
The lepers who dwelt in the caverns forgot;
The sisters who sobbed in that Bethany cot;
The woman that stood by the palms at the well;
The penitent thief, who was halfway in hell;
Sad souls whom this world had cast into the lurch,—
In Hardscrabble Chapel or Highsteeple Church?

Should he but walk, in his white vestiture,
'Mid the worshipers there, the rich and the poor;
See one lapping lambs in its warm woollen plaid,
One sitting in purple and fine linen clad,
One breaking its bread to those in distress,
One hoarding the honey of God's bounteousness,
One deep in His love as the wheel in the stream,
One craving to skim gay society's cream,—
His glorious robes would gather less smirch
In Hardscrabble Chapel than Highsteeple Church.



COMRADE HAYES

HE marched with us,—September's sun
Was bright on bannered Washington;
From the forum, factory, and farm,
The East and West went arm-in-arm;

Ten thousand shouts on loyal lips,
Ten thousand streamers made eclipse
Above that veteran host of blue
That walked the white-walled avenue;
But loudest rose the roar to greet
The statesman from the highest seat,
Who came, amid their wondering gaze,
To march with us,—our Comrade Hayes.

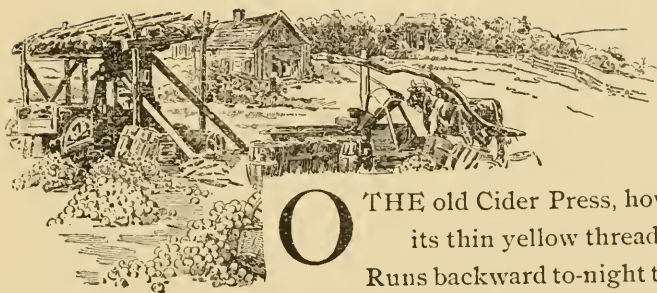
He fought with us. His glory is
A part of ours, and ours of his.
We followed when his charging line
Swept up South Mountain's red incline;
Heard his deep voice, above the din
Of battle, cheer his "Buckeyes" in;
We saw him, 'mid the missiles' whirr,
Wade that morass at Winchester.
See! how our eyes shine as we speak
Of that wild day at Cedar Creek,

When, cinched with deadly musket-blaze,
We fought with him,—our Comrade Hayes.

He sleeps with us, for we are one,
Beneath the sod, beneath the sun;
We guard the rear while those who died
Are bivouacked on the other side;
Some, in the springtime, deck the mounds,
In Paradise some pace their rounds;
But all are one, and aye shall be
Bound in eternal comradeship.
You have no part or lot in this,
Who gave him sneer, or stab, or hiss;
He heeds not now your blame or praise,
He sleeps with us,—our Comrade Hayes.

Columbia, thou who hast, at need,
Hearts of this high Homeric breed,
Thy gray-haired legions weep to-day;
The flags are draped, the dirges play,
The while each soul in sorrow bends;
This thrilling summons heaven sends:
Lift up thy tear-stained face and hear,
Blown o'er the river, sweet and clear,
The bugle-call that faints and swells
Across the fadeless asphodels:
"Turn out!" it sings; "each trump upraise!
Turn out to welcome Comrade Hayes!"

“THE OLD CIDER PRESS”



O 'THE old Cider Press, how
its thin yellow thread
Runs backward to-night to
the days that are dead,

When it fell from the mill with mellifluous sound,
Where the apples went in, and the oxen went round!
O the great honest eyes of the slow-moving steers
Seem to look at me now, like my own full of tears,
As I smell the sweet odor, which must be, I guess,
A breath of the past from the old Cider Press.

O the old Cider Press on the old orchard hill!
The brook was the hem and the forest the frill
Of that outskirt of Eden we called the “old farm,”
Where all knew the Lord and took hold of his arm.
Mellow Bellflower and Pippin, red Baldwin and Blush,
All pressed into pulp, as the great cities crush
The sad human hearts with shame and distress,
And Satan drinks the brew from the big Cider Press.

O my boy, dreaming there by the dim pasture bars,
With fields full of flowers and skies full of stars,
Go not to the town, with its smoke and its grime;
Dabble not in its dirt; do not die ere your time.
O bide where the wind wimples wide o'er the wheat,
Where the birds, and the bees, and the blossoms repeat
Your laugh when the lass of your heart answers "Yes,"
And you both sip the juice of the old Cider Press.



"THE BOY WHO NEVER RETURNED"



IN the glitter and glow of a day
like this—

When the women are lifting their
babes to kiss

The hero who wades thro' the
tides of cheers

Of the multitudes looking thro'
mists of tears,

As he breasted the batteries' iron
hiss

In the deathless days—when
high in the sun

"Old Glory" is riding the smil-
ing sky

On the trumpet's blast, O I miss
the one

Who tossed to us all the fond
"good-bye"

From his youthful soul, that burned
With exultant ardor to share the strife,
Saying that love was more than life.
Roll slow, O drum! Wail low, O fife!
For the boy who never returned.

"THE BOY WHO NEVER RETURNED"

This morning his mother bright chaplets made,
Baptizing with tears each bloomy braid;
While her wistful eyes were gazing South,
She whispered the name, with quivering mouth,
Of that warrior lad by the strangers laid
To sleep where the waves of a lone lagoon
Break round the grave of her boy in blue,
And the winds in the cypress thickets croon
His dirge on the bank of the dark bayou.
"O my soldier son!" she yearned;
"O to feel the clasp of thine empty sleeve!
O bitterest sweet on earth to grieve
Above thy dust, and a wreath to leave
O'er my boy who never returned!"

List, thou loyal woman, he is not there;
Did not thy child with his comrades fare
In spectral battalions along the street?
We heard no tread of their phantom feet,
But shadowy banners swept the air,
And our stormy shouting was meant, in part,
For the white host, hid from our mortal eyes,
Who came to comfort their country's heart
From their tents in the meadows of Paradise.
Yea, clad in the fame he earned,
He came from his camp on the crystal rim
Of the River of Life, as he came in the dim
Old days when the nation had need of him,
The boy who never returned.

JAMES NEWTON MATTHEWS

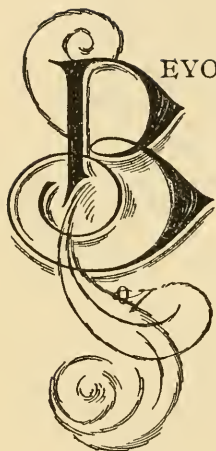


THE name which fell baptismal on thy brow
Of that apostle, brother of our Lord,
Surnamed "the Just," blameless in deed
and word,

Fell from a prophet's lips, for "just" art thou,
And his, surnamed "the Wise," who once did bow
Above the apple 'neath his garden tree,
When lo, beside it lay the golden key
With which we fare thro' all God's mansions now;
Yea, both of these in thee do meetly blend.
Themis and Pallas thro' thy spacious verse
Go gracefully, enamored of thine art;
Pushing thy fancy's 'broidered tapestry apart,
They peer where Love doth laughingly rehearse
Songs which thou singest us, Poet and Poet's Friend.



“JOSEPH”



BEYOND the farthest bourne of Dan
O'er lands where Heaven has laid
its ban,
Like a spent snake the caravan
Toward Egypt creeps;
And oft the wistful Jewish slave
Looks westward, where the cedars
lave
With murmurous shade his moth-
er's grave,
Where Rachel sleeps,
Till his bright eyes, because of mist,
See not the chain upon his wrist.

From out the loftiest linteled pile,
That mingled in the mirrored Nile
The lotus on its peristyle
With that mid-stream,
He looks again, thro' orbs that swim
In tears, where Jacob, old and dim
Of sight, comes chanting Israel's hymn
Of God supreme,

And sobs the purple can not check
Heave the bright chain about his neck.

Whoe'er for God hath iron worn,
Jehovah's gold shall yet adorn.



“LOVE IS ENOUGH”



THEY told of our Savior's pain,
The thorns and the thrilling cry,
His sorrow when scourged and slain,
While, over and over again,
From out my heart I was fain,
As the Son of Man I did see,
Lifted high on lone Calvary,
To sob out this sad refrain:
“O what does he want from me?”

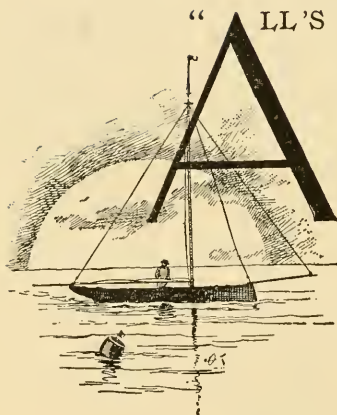
He has angels who sing alway
His praise, and with glory shine,
While I in my cottage with mine
Can only chant day by day
The sweet stanza, “When I survey
The cross,” and in wonder say,
“He has choirs by the crystal sea,
Who, with shawm and sweet psaltery,
From worship and work ne'er stray;
Then what does he want from me?”

When my Walter, our crippled one,
Who all thro' his life must be

My own burden, said, tenderly,
"O mother, for all thou hast done,
What is the reward thou hast won?
Lo, spirit and strength I have none
Like the others who circle thee."
Thro' tears I said, "Love is my fee,"
And lo, I had learned from my son
"What my Master doth want from me."



“ALL ’S WELL”



“ALL ’S WELL!” calls the sailor.

In the phosphorescent
Path of our prow all the
planets are still.

Thro’ this prairie of stars
we plow, as the peasant
And poet of Scotland his
white-daisied hill.

Some looking backward up-
on the sad severance
Thro’ mists of old mem-
ories, trying to quell

The hurt of the heart with the holiest reverence;
And some looking forward. On all the cry fell:

“All ’s well!” “All is well.”

Lo, every soul’s sorrow was lost in the swell
Of that cheery watchword, “All ’s well!” “All is well.”

“All ’s well!” calls the patriot, clothed in his purity,
Faithful ’mid those who are fain to betray;
Dim thro’ the marge of the murk and obscurity
He sees the dawn of a far better day.

Declaring our banner to be but the flowering

Of the centuries' cactus, the last miracle,
Born of the travail of ages, and towering
Aloft like the shout of this brave sentinel.

"All 's well!" "All is well."

And a great "Amen" falls from the high citadel
Of our nation's Valhalla. "All 's well!" "All is well."

"All 's well!" calls the Christian. Like an anemone

Blooming 'mid nettles, his faith seems to be;
He hath no fear, for the Christ of Gethsemane
Holdeth his heaven and his future in fee.

He knoweth that love at last will annihilate
Hate, and for thistle will plant asphodel,
To make of old earth an Eden inviolate.

O toss out from the turret the tones of the bell,

"All 's well!" "All is well."

Let no lamentation lift up its sad knell;

Sing "Glory to God," for "All 's well!" "All is well."



"PRETTY SOON"



PRETTY SOON!" "Pretty soon!"

How the soft phrase slips,
With limpid, laughing cadence,
thro' the languid lips,
Where the plumage of the palms, by
the south wind swayed,
Flings on the fragrant terraces its
filigree of shade;

When the almond and the myrtle
have taken in their net

The doves that tread the measure of the tender minuet,
And the nestlings of the nightingale cuddle low and
croon,

To the laughter of the laurel, "Pretty soon!" "Pretty
soon!"

" 'Pretty soon!' 'Pretty soon!'" cries Youth, "I shall
make

My home beyond the happy hills for her dear sake;
'There I will lead my darling, as Dawn doth lead the
Day

When God is making morning, to sit with her and say:
'You river to its ocean troth will never be more true;
The best of life is mine to-day, because of love and you.'
And heart shall rhyme to heart as unto the summer
moon

The swinging sea doth sing, 'Pretty soon!' 'Pretty
soon!'"

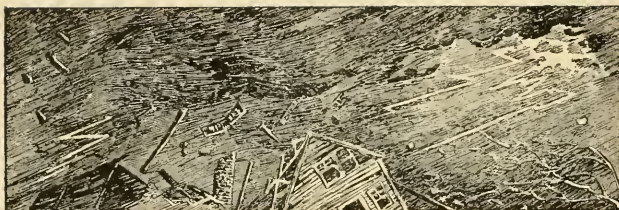
" 'Pretty soon!' 'Pretty soon!'" sighs Age, "I shall see
That happy home above us, where the many mansions be,
To pluck the never-fading flowers that make it ever
sweet,

And hear the pleasant paces of the silver-sandaled feet,
When beneath the healing trees they fill the crystal
urns;

O how the soul within me for their blessed welcome
yearns!

But the band of shining spirits, with lips and lutes in
tune,

Bid me wait, and bide their coming 'Pretty soon!'
'Pretty soon!'"



WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?"

SAITH the Scripture saint, "This life is
a cloud,

Which appeareth awhile and vanisheth
soon."

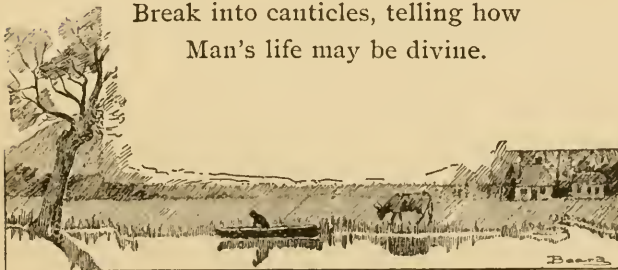
Not the cyclone stalking the summer
noon,

And shadowing earth with his inky shroud,
May thy life be, my friend;

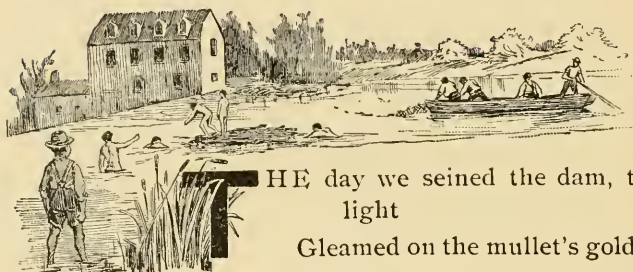
Where the frightened cities, beneath his frown,
Are caught in the twist of his whirling skein,
All strewed and spilled on the sodden plain,
The while the pitiless floods beat down,
And prayers for help ascend.

Not the mocking cloud that is moored in air,
 Upblown from the sea thro' the brazen sky,
 When the swooning world is like to die;
 And the blinding sun but a baleful glare
 And maddening fervor hath;
 Which seems so happy up there in heaven,
 While men are watching, with choking grief,
 Their harvests wither—bud, bloom, and leaf—
 For lack of the help that it might have given,
 And curse it in their wrath.

But the rosy cloud with the ripple of rain,
 The lisp and laughter of dripping leaves,
 That sings to the farmer the song of sheaves,
 And patters the tune on the window-pane
 Till the radiant bow doth shine
 In bands of glory around its brow;
 Till the vine-robed valley, the corn-clad hill,
 The bird and bloom, which have drunk their
 fill,
 Break into canticles, telling how
 Man's life may be divine.



“THE DAY WE SEINED THE DAM”



THE day we seined the dam, the
light
Gleamed on the mullet's golden
scales,
When, arching in his arrowy flight,
He cuffed the glinting jewels bright
About the boy who held the brails,
And lit the lake with shining scrolls
Of radiant rings that roughed its calm,
As heavenly raptures stir the souls
Of saints,—the day we seined the dam.

The day we seined the dam, the brim
Held all the hamlet's boisterous brood ;
Each tossed his tunic far from him,
Waded knee-deep, sun-tanned and slim,
And stood there unashamed and nude ;
The tamaracks shook when they laughed,
And rhythmic strophes, like a psalm,

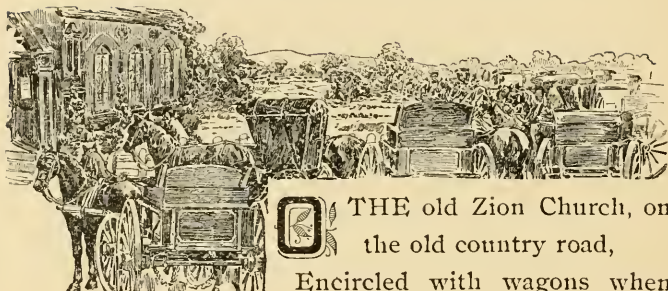
Broke on the shore, as from the raft
 They dived—the day we seined the dam.

The day we seined the dam, a bird
 Told but one tale from birchen boughs
 Wherein the sleeping south wind stirred;
 And down rose-hidden aisles the herd
 Came tinkling to the brink to browse,
 And in tall reeds, all satisfied,
 They stood where billows shook the balm
 From lilies tilted on the tide
 That rolled—the day we seined the dam.

The day we seined the dam, how slipped
 The stream, in slopes of rainbow spray,
 Down to the depths where alders dipped
 Their beads, like monks who, in a crypt
 For peace, unto the Highest pray.
 O could I plunge in that deep pool,
 With all my woes, just as I am,
 And rise again as clean and cool
 As then, the day we seined the dam!



"THE OLD ZION CHURCH"



O THE old Zion Church, on
the old country road,
Encircled with wagons when
each brought a load

Of the farmers, who came when the calm Sabbath-day
Put the plow and the reaper and planter away.
I can hear "Coronation" flow out from the choir,
Bubbling over the building and up to the spire,
Where one pair of bluebirds on Sunday did perch
Just to join in the hymns of the old Zion Church.

O the old Zion Church, down its unpainted aisles
How the river of song broke in ripples of smiles
As the bride drew her robes from the altar to door
Thro' sunshine that sweetened the old oaken floor.
And tears often flowed; for the whole village wept
When the bonnie wee babe in its white coffin slept,
While the good pastor told how Death, in his search
For the good Shepherd's lambs, came to old Zion Church.

O the old Zion Church—I can see it in spring,
 When the orchards enfold it in sweet blossoming;
 And thro’ the long summer it basks in the heat
 Where swift swallows swim the waves of the wheat;
 To the tone of its bell, on the still Autumn morn,
 The quail whistles alto far off in the corn;
 And in Winter the snow wraps the cedar and birch
 Keeping watch o’er the graves by the old Zion Church.

O the old Zion Church,—where the oak ever waves
 Its mantle of gloom o’er my ancestors’ graves,
 Where my father and mother were long ago laid,
 And whippoorwill mourns in the murmurous shade.
 When my time comes to say a farewell to the earth,
 I would like to return to the scenes of my birth,
 Shake off the old life, leave the world in the lurch,
 For heaven is not far from the old Zion Church.



“RIGHT ON!”



“I kept right on.”—*Grant's Memoirs.*

RIGHT ON! in the years of war, of clamor,
and rumor, and woe;
Right on! when tyrants of Europe said
softly, “God orders it so;”
Right out of the heart of the West, when
all the land was dumb,
Came Grant, and the nation said, “At last
the mighty man has come.”

Right on! Against his belted braves old Shiloh's bat-
teries boomed.

Right on! Across this hero's path the bluffs of Vicks-
burg loomed.

Over Mission Ridge and Lookout Mount serene and
strong he trod,

And the loyal North leaned hard on him as he leaned
hard on God.

Right on! when, beside the Rapidan, Lee stood across
his path,

And, overwhelmed, laid down his sword to bide the vic-
tor's wrath;

But behold how kindly greetings banish every sharp
 regret,
 As hand in hand the chieftains stand, and both are
 brothers yet.

Magnanimous, unassuming soul, his stern and martial
 face
 Looked soft as to the boys in gray he said, with courtly
 grace,
 "Go home again in peace, my friends," and then the
 warrior calm
 Came back when all his task was done to wear the
 wreath of palm.

Right on! when cowards behind him cheapened his
 kingly fame;
 Right on! when the paltry enemies pecked at his lustrous
 name;
 When the kings of Europe applauded him, all courteous
 and mild,
 He kept the soldier's equipoise and the candor of a
 child.

Right on! as ruler, the ship of state with steady hand
 he steered,
 And never a hairbreadth, right or left, in any place he
 veered

Best of the West, thou sturdy type of the sterling, rare
antique;

As soldier, more than a Roman bold; as a patriot, more
than a Greek.

Right on! from his agonized body the 'spirit has now
gone forth.

Pile palm upon his grave, O South, and pine, thou
weeping North;

For, safe in America's Pantheon, our great soldier's
shade we see,

With one hand outreached to Lincoln and the other to
Robert Lee.





THE BACK LOG'S BLAZE
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THE BACK LOG'S BLAZE



THE back log's blaze—where the wide arch
showed

The gloom above the hearth, where the red
coals glowed;

How it made the dusky shadows on the
white walls lurch

When the wind around the eaves the crevices did
search.

How the cheery cricket chirruped at every childish jest,
Keeping time in crispy rhyme to the tune he loved the best;
When the curly king of home, with all his cunning
ways,

Was cooed and crooned to slumber by the back log's
blaze.

O the back log's blaze,—when the lovers softly laughed,
Then the silence heard the whiz of Cupid's wingéd shaft,
And swarming sparkles flew up the open chimney-throat
To the boughs of bloomy stars in the firmament afloat;
The sun of ninety summers split the oaken log, and laid
A pathway down to Paradise for lover and for maid,
And paved a golden plaza where, amid the kindly rays,
The romping children rolled by the back log's blaze.

O the back log's blaze,—then the world was fair to me,
Far whiter than the outer snow the inner purity.

When winter hounds were baying the cold December
moon,

The wooers, hand in hand, went along the lanes of
June;

The while the tempest roared, the mother rocked her
child,

Then bending o'er the cradle, how wistfully she smiled!
What visions of his future rose before her loving gaze
As she stooped to kiss him gently, by the back log's
blaze!

O the back log's blaze! I can see it rise and fall,
Lighting up that happy circle when the family was all
Gathered near it in the evening in the dear, old place.

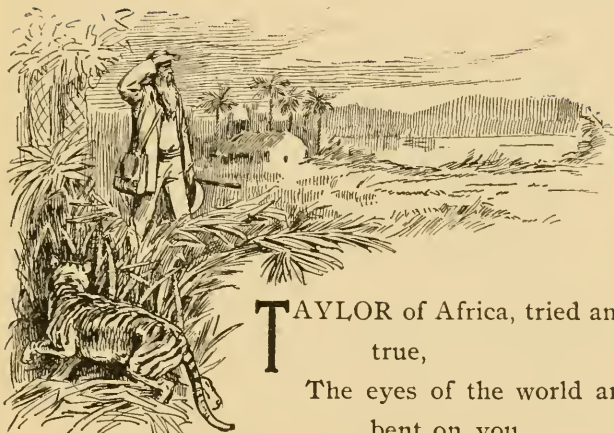
O, I fancy it would smooth again the wrinkles from my
face,—

Every tear would disappear like the snowflakes in the
flue,

As they fell into the flames that my heart is turning to,
Could those whom God has taken forget their hymns of
praise

And just come and sit together, by the back log's blaze.

"TAYLOR OF AFRICA"



TAYLOR of Africa, tried and
true,

The eyes of the world are
bent on you,

Bearing your torch in the moral murk,
Where the awful shapes forever lurk;
Proud are we of the dauntless pith,
Of the glorious heart you front them with.
Canst thou, old Egypt, match that pair?
One lying low, one battling there,
One dead on the Nile with broken blade,
One erect on the Congo, undismayed.
Britain gave Gordon, and we gave you,
Taylor of Africa, tried and true.

Taylor of Africa, come and rest
A night and a day in the mighty west;
Bring thy face with visions plowed,
Thy splendid soul that ne'er was cowed,
Thy mind which spills through smiling lips
What thy large eyes see in Apocalypse.
O your quenchless hope, your manly grain
Maketh Paul of Tarsus to live again!
In shallow forms our souls are fast;
As a cañon rings to a bugle blast,
Blow your trumpet our slumbers through,
Taylor of Africa, tried and true.

Taylor of Africa, heart of oak,
Hew Christ a path with sturdy stroke.
The owls may hoot, the weaklings pule,
The gilded gewgaws call thee fool;
God speed thee in that far-off clime
And give thy spirit strength to rhyme,
With the gospel message as it rolls
The shout of a million ransomed souls!
Thou wilt come some day unto the throne
With troops of her children as thine own,
Saying, "Lord, hast thou more work to do?"
Taylor of Africa, tried and true.

“THE BOY WE NEVER SAW”



Every potters work in common clay, are
common clay ourselves,
Just as humble and as homely as
the jugs upon our shelves;
But this child was alabaster fair,
without a fleck or flaw,
Sit down here, until I tell you, sir,
of the boy we never saw.

One day last fall a likely ball lay on the molding rim,
And in the shed, at his wheel head, stood this stranger Jim.
He tied his apron on and tossed a nod across to me,
Then struck his treadle softly as a master strikes a key.

He held the mass a moment, then so coaxingly and
slow,
With every turn the shapely urn in beauty seemed to
grow,
And when the wire cut the work from off his heavy
wheel,
We knew he was a craftsman true, from head to flying
heel.

Jim had a younkite, four years old, just coming down
to die,

A sickly lad who suffered so that the women had to cry,
Telling how the little tyke, soon as the pain would stop,
Called for the little kickshaws we sent him from the
shop.

We made the queerest cups, and then we made the
oddest jars,

With many a dip of smoothest slip, and many curious
stars,

We chinked them in the hottest kiln, farthest from the
blaze,

Then took our turns to fire them, and took our turns to
glaze.

The foreman, in a Bible, found some pictured cups and
bowls,

Lovingly we shaped them, sir, with all their ancient
scrolls.

He filled them overflowing with the love he sent, to
say

That he wanted to come and see us all, but he had to go
away.

We all knocked off the day he died. The Chapel
preacher told

That shepherds take a lamb to lead a flock into the
fold,

And how the singing seraphs stood around the throne,—
but la!

There is not an angel there to match the boy we never
saw.

We potters work in common clay, are common clay
ourselves,

Just as humble and as homely as the jugs upon our
shelves;

O we mean to see him some day, sir! But my old
eyelids—pshaw!—

Begin to leak whene'er I speak of that boy we never
saw.





MARY

THRO' the garden at morn,
in cool emerald gloom,
Wends the sad woman,
leaving her lost Sav-
ior's tomb,

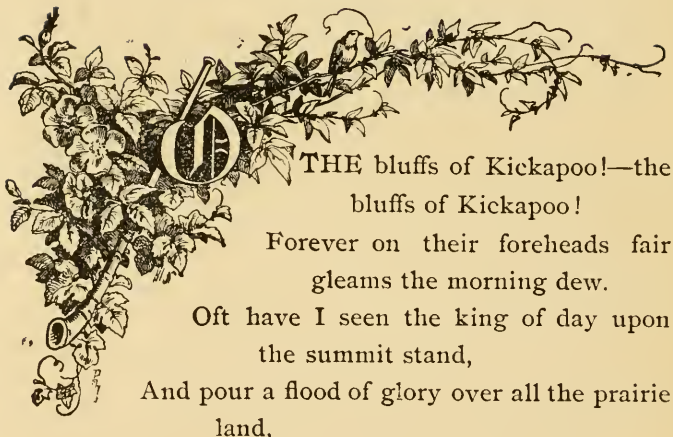
Swerving on with no look to the skies purple flushed,
Thro' lithe lilies leaning, expectant and hushed.
Her unhooded brow with the dawn pallor shone,
Faring wofully back from the grave and its stone;
When, before the believer, who wept for the dead,
Rose the Master, and just the word "Mary," he said.

Lo! there in the dusk of the whispering palm,
Her raiment all sweet with the spikenard and balm,
The myrtle tops burning with sunlight above
Hung over the sinner, redeemed by His love,
Purer far than the dewdrops upon her dark hair,
Shaken down by the pink-footed doves cooing there,
When the laurel's low Litany suddenly stilled,
At the ringing "Rabboni" her happy heart spilled.

Easter cometh, and Magdalene calls us with her,
 Thro' gray olive shade, to the Lord's sepulcher,
 Where angelic words at the cypress-hid prison,
 Linked like dulcimers, say unto us, "He is risen."
 Unsandaled and still, with souls all aglow,
 Drawing near we see Death, our discomfited foe,
 Folding all the fine linen Christ never will need,
 With face strangely soft, saying, "Risen, indeed."



THE BLUFFS OF KICKAPOO



And then beheld him bending unto the river's side,
Like one who cometh gallantly to claim a comely bride;
And fling her veil of shining mist far up into the blue,
To float in fleecy clouds above the bluffs of Kickapoo.

O the bluffs of Kickapoo!—the bluffs of Kickapoo!
I see the bridge beyond the ridge, I see the shallows, too;
Beneath the alder bushes, how shines the sparkling ring,
Made by the leap of croppie, or the dip of swallow's
wing!

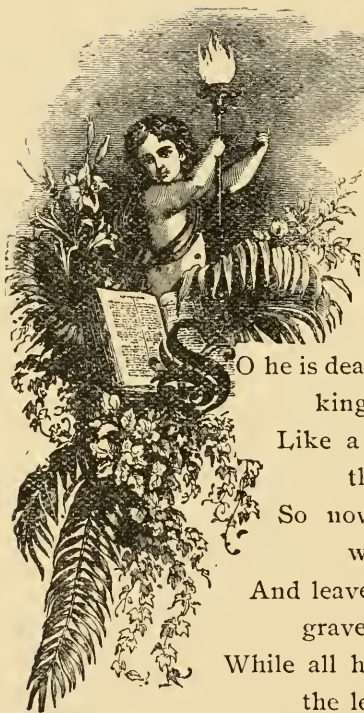


THE BLUFFS OF KICKAPOO
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The blossoms of the tangled plum are full of sweet perfume,
The flight of startled redbird lights up the spicy gloom.
No summer day was long enough when it was spent
with you,
And night was never welcome on the bluffs of Kickapoo.

O the bluffs of Kickapoo!—the bluffs of Kickapoo!
Though far away, my soul to-day doth bring them into
view;
Amid the trees, around their knees, my boyish heart is
hid,
Where gossips tell, thro' all the dell, what little Katy
did.
And here, among the city streets, how oft my spirit
yearns
To hear thy ripples rhyme again, amid the fringe of
ferns,
O for one hour of that old joy, when all my life was
new,
To climb the path to heaven up the bluffs of Kickapoo!





VICTOR HUGO

O he is dead, you say! that dauntless
king who loomed
Like a snowy mountain, above
the pines of France.
So now he clambers sunward,
with spirit all illumed,
And leaves his weary frame in the
grave's deep trance.
While all his loyal comrades, beside
the leader's tomb,
Grove, baffled and bewildered, thro'
the cold, gray gloom.

Dead, with his Ætna heart all burned to ashes now;
The eloquent, resistless lips silent in the dust;
That pen which wrote the doom upon Napoleon's brow,
And jarred his rotten throne, is laid away to rust.

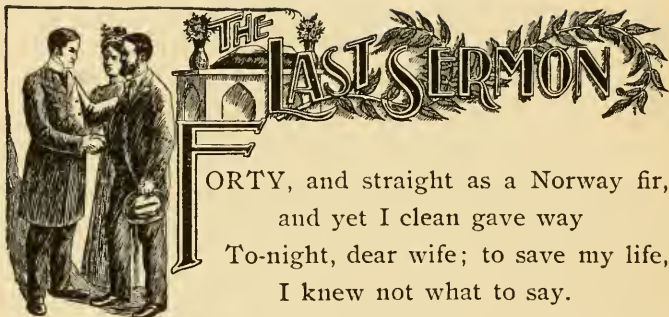
Loved by God and little children, O honey-hearted man,
How shall the world go onward, with no Hugo in the
van?

The last of the immortals, latest of the lofty strain,
All suckled in adversity, who tugged our sinking
race
Out of miry shamelessness. To keep thee we were fain,
But lo, the Lord hath called thee to thy exalted place,
Where the others all await thee, crowned and battle-
scarred,
To greet thee at thy coming to receive thy rich reward.

A prophet named thee Victor, thou who hast never
failed;

When God had need of man, singer, seer, and sage,
all three,
Thou righteously didst smite, never doubted, drooped,
nor quailed;

For fifty glorious years led the hosts of Liberty.
When the Future says to France, "O name thy noblest
soul,"
She will show, with radiant face, thy name upon her
scroll!



FORTY, and straight as a Norway fir,
 and yet I clean gave way
 To-night, dear wife; to save my life,
 I knew not what to say.
 Back came hurrying memories, like
 doves that homeward fly;
 How they gave us cheer for every year! O swiftly they
 went by,
 Freely as God spilled streams of suns to sweeten the
 abyss,
 When the clump of chaos blossomed into worlds like
 unto this.
 I spake for you, and the wee ones too, but O my eyes
 were blurred,
 When all was done for every one, and I came to the
 parting word;
 With all my soul, like the open scroll of the stainless
 heaven, I
 Said, "Old Bible and old pulpit, and old Shiloh Church,
 good-bye!"

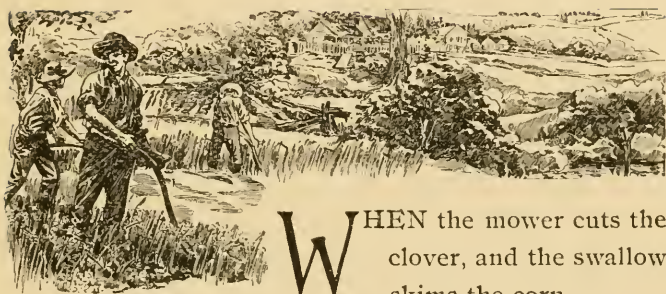
Silence, like the spaces vast, and feeling, profound as
the sea,
Came o'er them when I fondly told what they had done
for me.
'Thro' loving smiles along the aisles I went to take my
stand;
And manfully I tried to say, as I grasped each friendly
hand,
"God fold you fast!" but failed at last when up came
Abner Smith,
His face lit with the great big heart he loves his chil-
dren with,
And, when they brought him forward there, he stam-
mered, and began,
"I was only a drunkard when you came, and now I am
a man;"
And then his wife so sadly said, "'T is hard to hear you
tell
The old Bible, and old pulpit, and old Shiloh Church
farewell!"

When to-morrow, at the break of day, that harvester,
the sun,
Shall husk the early shadows from the hill-tops, one by
one,
And by the winds of morning the shreds are swept, and
whirled,
And piled upon the porphyry plain that rims the wak-
ing world,

When the torch of dawn among them makes all the
east to glow,
Then, with our babes around us, we will both arise
and go
Back to the humble building, and, with all our hearts
and minds,
Sing the song we 've loved so long,—“Blest be the tie
that binds,”
And with a sigh say fond “Good-bye,” till Shiloh
Church we greet
Thro' other eyes in Paradise, childlike round Shiloh's
feet.



SOMETHING IN THE SUMMER



WHEN the mower cuts the
clover, and the swallow
skims the corn,
And the cockerel is telling he is glad that he was born;
When the dawn is rich with robins, piping in the
poplar trees,
And, deep within the hollyhocks, you hear the honey
bees;
When the quail calls up his covey, by the whistle of his
name,
In the plaited old fence corner, with its Indian pinks
afame,

*O something in the summer seems to say,
Sip the sweetness of the morning, while you may,
For Love will soon be winging on his way—
Something in the summer seems to say.*

When the wheat upon the hillside, in bending billows
 rolled,
Is tossing scarlet poppies high upon its waves of gold;
 When by the tree the baby, whose father binds the
 sheaves,
 Is laughing at the squirrels hid among the lisp-
 ing leaves;
When reapers rest at noon within the ample leafy
 shade,
Where the oriole is swinging in his emerald ambushade,

*O something in the summer seems to say,
Sip the sweetness of the morning, while you may,
For Love will soon be winging on his way—
Something in the summer seems to say.*

When the blackbird, in the tree-top, is tangled in his
 song,
And the catbird gives him challenge, whether right or
 wrong;
 When the speckled hawk is sweeping across the
 distant sky,
 And friendly sheep are grazing all about you, as you
 lie
Looking down some river bend where a bit of blue doth
 shine,
So vaguely thro' the curtain of the trumpet creeper
 vine,

*O something in the summer seems to say,
Sip the sweetness of the morning, while you may,
For Love will soon be winging on his way—
Something in the summer seems to say.*

When all the hills are hazy, and the heated hollows
make
An echo to the pheasant, drumming deep within the
brake,
When you loaf, and look and listen, where honey-
suckles sway
Their lamps in dim savannas, dreaming back a happy
day;
When you drift with sleepy lids, by sheer laziness op-
pressed,
Thro' the languor of the spirit, when you only think of
rest,

*O something in the summer seems to say,
Sip the sweetness of the morning, while you may,
For Love will soon be winging on his way—
Something in the summer seems to say.*

When nature doth entice you with a hundred soothing
charms,
And you feel yourself enfolded in her strong maternal
arms;

And peace comes down, so soft, upon the weary
heart and brain,
You break the heavy shackles and the soul doth see
again,
All the visions of the future, long forgotten, drawing
near,
All your hopes and your ideals calling unto you so clear,

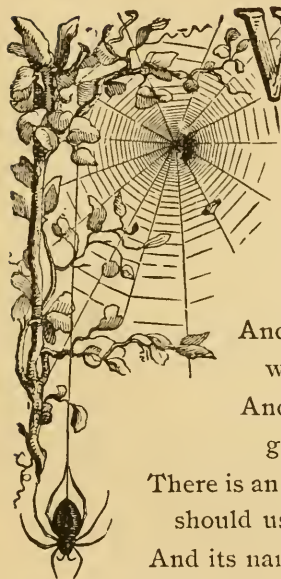
*O something in the summer seems to say,
Sip the sweetness of the morning, while you may,
For Love will soon be winging on his way—
Something in the summer seems to say.*





WHERE THE CORK GOES DOWN

"WHERE THE CORK GOES DOWN"



WHEN your wife has gone to
visit where mother dear
resides,

And you could not win a battle,
if you owned both sides,
When you become so weary
that you can not turn a
wheel,

And drag yourself to labor with a
weight at either heel,
And quarrel with your shadow and
give the folks the "blues,"

There is an ancient medicine that every man
should use.

And its name is "go a-fishing." Get a long
and limber pole,

With some tackle and a can of bait, and start toward
the hole

Out beyond the river bend, about a mile or two from
town,

Just to loaf and lounge at leisure where the cork goes
down.

Some meander to the mountains cool, and some toward
the sea,

But I will take my chances underneath the chestnut tree
That lays upon the sloping bank its shadows deep and
wide,

And flings its raveled blossoms down upon the lazy tide.
There all my troubles tumble with the turtles out of
sight,

When from the yellow stubble comes the yodel of "Bob
White;"

And there I speculate in futures just as freely as I like,
For I may pull out a muscalonge, a pickerel, or a pike;
But the hope upon my features fades away into a frown
When a "pumpkin-seed" deceives me where the cork
goes down.

Some say, "Work your muscle if you want to rest your
mind,"

I say, "Let them both relax when health you want to
find,

Take a dose of doing nothing; take it on some river
shore,

Where a flicker far above you raps upon a sycamore,
And a devil's darning-needle gads around you just as
glad

And contended as the pollywog upon the lily pad."

O when your hook is fastened in a lusty, leaping bass,
And at the battle's ending you can lay him on the grass,

You feel so full of spirit from your shoes up to your
crown

That your life will be worth living where the cork goes
down.

A chap who studies eating, says that fish is good for
brain :

I think it is the fishing, not the fish, that gives the gain ;
For I have noticed that the fellows let imagination play
Round the wonderful dimensions of the one that got
away ;

And the stories chase each other, just as chipper and as
free

As the squirrels winding streaks of red around the elm-
tree.

O when the sun is near to setting, your soul begins to
sing

As you purchase from a country boy a dozen on a string,
And you march home in the evening a romancer of re-
nown,

Telling how you missed the big one where the cork
goes down.

“WHERE ARE THE HEROES?”



HERE are the heroes of old days?”

He asks, and lifts his lyre, and chants,
In sounding psalm, the meed of praise
Due to the dead itinerants;

The men who, fearless, trod the maze
Of unpathed forests, sailed the sea,
Preached, prayed, and rode with Asbury,
That Christ might have sole empery.

“Where are the heroes of old days?”

The while beside him men say this:

“Send us where souls in sorrow die;
Where heathenism’s brood will hiss
In hell’s dread dialect, when high
The cross of Calvary we raise;
To serve where Satan has his seat;
To warm them with our own heart’s heat;
And, when ’t is done, say death is sweet.”

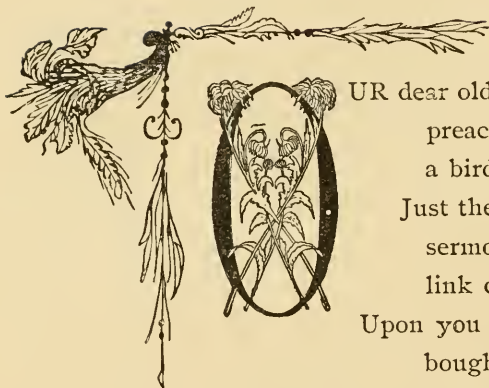
“Where are the heroes of old days?”

Their hymns are heard in cañons cold,
By blight or blizzard undismayed;

The frontier's farthest farm they fold
 In Jesus' love, and with Him wade
 The Siddim's slime of city ways;
 Thro' crying want and crushing debt
 Give one their tears and one their sweat,
 And, dying, ask of God to get—
 "Where are the heroes of old days."



"JIM'S MEETING"



UR dear old pastor used to
preach, as natural as
a bird,

Just the cheery kind of
sermons that a bobo-
link can pour

Upon you from a cherry
bough, whenever he
was stirred ;

His wooing talk would almost win the fishes to the
shore.

But he wandered off one day,
In a curious sort of way,
And got badly "in the brush," as the circuit-riders
say.

Down at Ebenezer Chapel there was meeting; every
night

The parson pleaded tenderly, though he was weak
and worn,

Saying, "Come, my neighbors, come! O come into the
light,

To stand with us together in the dawning of the
morn!"

And when he stopped to cough

Not a sinner dared to scoff,

From the graybeards in the corner to the lovers far-
thest off.

Then his voice went to a whisper—he could not speak
at all;

And next evening I saw Jim, the ragged child of
cobbler Wood,

Shivering at the crowded entrance, close against the
outer wall,

Till he called the preacher over in the corner where
he stood,

And he said, "I heard them pray,

At our home, for you, to-day,

And I went out and dug some medicine to drive that
pain away."

"God bless you!" said the preacher to the boy so thin
and cold,

And unwrapped the little parcel with his gentle,
patient smile;

'T was a stringy root of calamus, in brownish paper
rolled,

But I saw his face was beaming as he elbowed up
the aisle.

Then he read a tender hymn,

And in prayer my eyes were dim

As he knelt there, reaching up for God and down for
little Jim.

When he rose and read a Scripture like a dripping
honeycomb,

O I saw the gift had cured him, for, my friend, he
fairly took

That crowd, and led them captive all into the Father's
home;

Beneath his melting pathos stoutest sinners swayed
and shook;

As a river deep and wide

Shoulders at a dam, he cried,

"Come, Lord!" and when it tottered all the town was
in the tide.

All around the mourners' benches people gathered with
a rush,

And amid the praying penitents disciples worked
and wept;

But he could say no more—he had strayed into the
brush;

Lost in some Eden thicket, while the stream of
mercy swept

All about the young and old,

And a hymn of joy was rolled

From the lips of shouting converts, coming safe into
the fold.

When Wood, who was converted, went singing down
the road,

The preacher walked beside him, just to tell his
faithful wife,

And they filled the lowly cottage full of melody that
flowed

Until midnight, for a man redeemed and started new
in life.

And often I have cried,

As he has told, with pride,

Of "Jim's Meeting," as he called it to the very day he
died.

“THE BROOK”



HOW it bubbles clear in the cool, damp room,
Where the pans of milk light up the
gloom,
All sweet with breath of the summer
bloom
On the swaying locust boughs,
Where the cobweb lace doth the walls
adorn,
When the passionate sun at the peep of morn,
Breaks into the nook where the brook is born,
In the lowly old spring-house.

Down beechen bluffs to the blue-grass plain,
It winds the thread of its silvery skein
On the old mill-wheel again and again,
Where the jocund miller sings;
Mid briery mazes, thro' blossomy meads,
Where trout leap up at the drifting seeds,
And the cat-bird dips the alder's beads
In broken ripples and rings.

How it shimmers and shines across the sand
To the winey tarn, where cattle stand,



THE BROOK
141

When the heat is heavy on all the land,
 Deep in the shady pond,
 And from all the hives the buskined bees
 Fly out to the orchard to rifle and tease
 Their sweets from the spreading apple-trees
 On yellowing hills beyond.

And when all oblivious it hath flowed,
 By the pasture-field and the winding road,
 To the doorway of many a cot, and showed
 Its cheery, laughing face;
 And reluctant, slow, it comes to the sea,
 How I wonder if ever it turns like me,
 To the ancient room and the locust tree,
 And thinks of its old birthplace.



THE DOGWOOD TREE



RIDE of the woodland wide, dainty and undefiled,

Bright is the blessing thy beauty doth bring!
When April leadeth thee, with thy white
garments free,

Up from the South, in the front of the Spring,
Shaking the snow of thy bridal robes sweet,
Flowing, in foamy surf, down to thy feet,
Bride of the woodland wild, dainty and undefiled,
Thee we are waiting to greet.

Winter has lingered long; O how we miss the song
That always welcomes thee over the hill,
The bold chee-wink, chee-wink, of the gay bobolink,
And the low call of the coy whippoorwill,
For thee doth the morning lark scatter the night;
For thee doth the tanager flash in his flight,
Bride of the woodland wild, dainty and undefiled,
Haste thee to dawn on our sight!

How thou wilt miss the one, who was the first to run,
Laughing, to meet thee along the lone glen!

Swallows are making search, and from the graceful birch
Kingfisher calls her again and again.

Long will the wren wait to show her small nest,
And the brown fledgelings beneath her proud breast,
Bride of the woodland wild, dainty and undefiled,
Darling has gone to her rest.



GOD'S MANUSCRIPT



UPON the hallowed ground of Galilee, O John,
Thy Master writeth, while the wolfish
crowd

Bends lowering looks upon the woman
bowed,

Cursing her lovely face, so tearful and so
wan;

Still asks the deep heart of mankind, which sees
Her streaming eyes fixed on the brow divine,
"What was the import of that single line
Writ by the gracious Christ amid the Pharisees?"
Saying, "O to have seen upon the favored sod
Those jewels from the forefinger of our God!
Go forth this morn in May, where, all unrolled,
The daisied meadow lies, signed o'er with gold;
In flowery text he writes his gospel as of old!"

THE UNKNOWN



JACK swings on the mast; his heart ne'er
quakes

When Euroclydon tumbles the sea, and
takes

His ship, like a harp, in his hands, and wakes
From every rope a wail.

He has weathered a hundred storms before;
And his faith will weather a hundred more,
But the roaring stress of a street ashore
Makes him cower and quail.

Dick plays his part in the mart's mad rush,
As calm in the din of its deafening crush
As a fawn at dawn, in the purple hush
Of the palms of Paradise.

He dreads the deep, where the wild waves comb
Their crests on the breasts of gulls that roam
Thro' the spray, as gray as the flying foam
That flecks the lurid skies.

Each wonders at each, for both can bide
The known, but fear what they have not tried,

So man doth shrink from the echoless tide
Where waits the boatman pale;
Kindly Death doth smile at his freight afraid,
And strips the mist with his oar's swift blade
From the strand where the band, in white arrayed,
Shouts, "Welcome, and all hail!"



ON CHRISTMAS EVE



ON Christmas Eve, in this
dim room,
There drifts across the
deepening gloom
The faint, old-fashioned, spicy scent
Of mistletoe and holly blent;
And while the cheery wood-fire burns,
She whom I loved and lost returns
To sit beside me,—soft and low,
I hear the voice which, long ago,
Around my heart a spell did weave,
When life was young on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve I see the pond,
And from the hollow woods beyond,
Comes echoing back the skaters' glee,

As happy sweethearts swinging free,
In rhythmic stroke and graceful curve
Across the crystal surface swerve.
O eyes of blue! O curls of brown!
O streaming scarf! O fluttering gown!
How doth your lover lonely grieve
When all are glad on Christmas Eve!

On Christmas Eve, along the street
The people pass on eager feet,
With gifts to greet the gladsome morn
Of that blest day when Christ was born.
Each to his own will cry, "Take this!"
And each will share the smile, the kiss,
While I alone shall try, thro' tears,
To count the sad and sombre years
Since that dark day when thou didst leave
This world all cold, on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve I envy not
The laughing ones, whose happier lot
It is to join the scenes of mirth,
And cry, rejoicing, "Peace on earth!"
Some day I feel I too shall win
My Father's house, and enter in;
For by the portal she doth bide,
Robed and expectant as a bride;
Then all her love I will receive,
In God's good time on Christmas Eve.

COMMON THINGS



HEAVEN send us a prophet with wit to
teach

Our race, which to folly so fondly
clings,

That all that is good is within our reach,
The cream of life is the common
things.

We may have no turreted palaces piled
In high colonnade and pillar and cope,
But forever the mountains undefiled
For us thro' the roseate azure slope.

There never was park like the prairie lawn,
Nor symphonies like the ocean's song,
Nor picture to match the amethyst dawn,—
These blessings to all of our kind belong!

No wine gives the fillip of frosty air;
No satin e'er came from a foreign loom
As white as the sheen of the lilies fair,
Wan acolytes lighting the woodland gloom.

Because the bright river is free to all,
To man and beast, to flower and tree,
And on every sinner the sunbeams fall,
The sun and the stream are dear to me.

We have winds that silver the dusky rill;
The forest of pines, with healing breath;
And friends and home, and love, and still
The best of all, our old neighbor Death.



PICTURES OF THE PAST



GOD is good to let us keep in
mind the pictures of
the past ;

And sometimes in the sum-
mer, when the seething
city's clack

Flings sorrow on my
fevered soul, I take the
outward track,

And from off my weary spirit
all the slavish burdens
cast.

O leaving work half-done,

Far away from care I run

To where a brook winds thro' a wood and wimples in
the sun.

I saunter in the tousled grass that tangles round my
feet ;

High above my lifted head, where the tulip-trees are
crossed,

In her cool and airy cradle, the cardinal-bird is tossed ;
While the emerald grove is girt with the gold of wavy
wheat,

And the rivulet is traced
By a thread of silver, laced
Thro' ferns and fair white lilies wading in it to the waist.

Far away I hear the murmur by the dripping mill-wheel
made ;

Dewy roses light the thickets, where ring-doves coo
and croon ;

From the levels comes the music of the mowers'
harvest tune,

All rejoicing in a cadence to the swish of sharpened
blade,

While the quail in coveys rise,
Whirring from the gleaming scythes,
And the frightened rabbit leaps at the harvester's loud
cries.

The unwithered bloom of bramble winds the fences in
its wreath ;

Where the squirrel sits and chats with the reiterat-
ing jay ;

And the honey-burdened bee doth halt, upon her
homeward way,

Where sumach spreads its branches over partridge-eggs
beneath ;

On distant slopes the sheep,
In long shadows lie asleep,
And across the winding path I watch the tortoise slowly
creep.

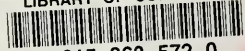
Far down the lane the oxen strain against the polished
yoke,
As they draw the creaking wagon up toward the
traveled road;
And the laughter of the boys that ride upon the
fragrant load
Has scared the speckled hawk from his perch upon the
oak;
For, with a sudden cry,
He mounteth up on high,
And wheels in burnished curves upon the dappled
summer sky.

The anise and the spice-bush have brewed a rare perfume,
Along the woodland edge, where the workers rest
from toil,
Floats the smell of meadow-sorrel, the scent of penny-
royal,
Mingled with the breath of balsam and the wild grape
bloom.
Once more I sit and sing,
Within the forest swing,
Where, enamored of the murmurous tree, the vine doth
cling.

Thro' the Babel of the town, high above the whistle's
scream,
I hear the modulated chirring of the shrill cicada's
voice,
And oblivious of my labor, make again my youthful
choice
Of the berries from the brier, or the pebbles from the
stream;
A glow of love is cast
Over all my life at last,
As Fancy turns the pages of the pictures of the past.



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